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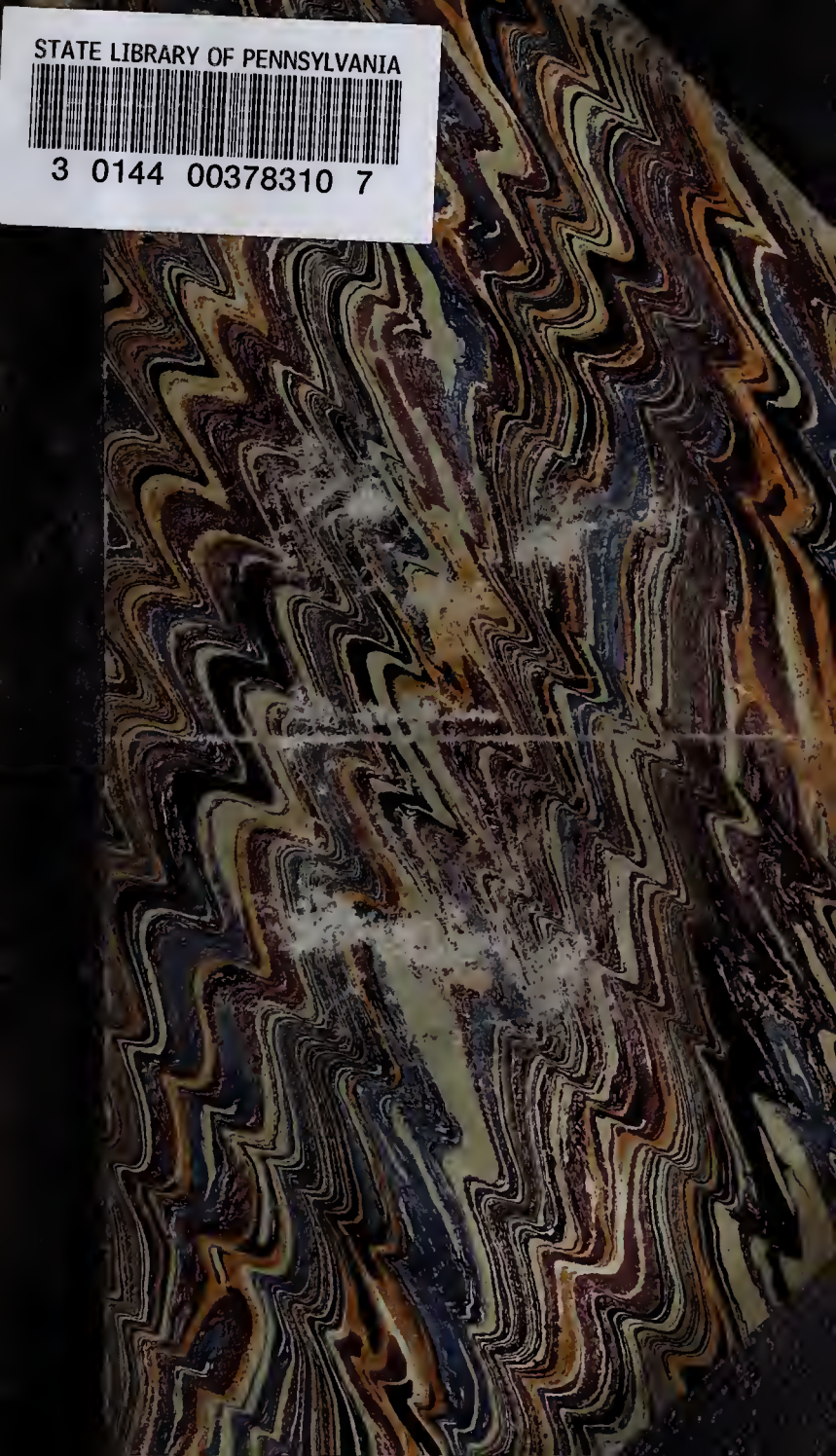

1776

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VOLUME 4

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LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

VOL. IV.

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LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ

TO

HER DAUGHTER

AND

HER FRIENDS.

AN ENLARGED EDITION,

TRANSLATED FROM THE PARIS EDITION OF 1806.

IN NINE VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

LONDON:

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1811.

LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ, &c.

[The Letters with an asterisk before the number are new Letters.]

LETTER CCCXCIX.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, March 22, 1676.

I AM in very good health, my dear, but in my rebellious hands there is neither rhyme nor reason I therefore employ the little girl for the last time: she is the sweetest girl in the world; I know not what I should have done without her; she reads whatever I wish, and you see how she writes; she loves me, is very obliging, and likes to talk of madame de Grignan: in short, I beg you to love her for my sake.

THE LITTLE GIRL FOR HERSELF.

I SHOULD be too happy, madam, were that the case: I dare say you envy me the pleasure of being constantly about my lady, your mother: she made me write all this in praise of myself: I am perfectly ashamed of

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it; and am, at the same time, grieved at the thoughts of her departure.

CONTINUED FOR MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

My little girl wished to talk to you a little: but now I return to you, my dear child, to tell you, that except my hands, which I do not expect to be well till the weather is warm, you have no reason to say, you could not know me. My face is not altered, my mind and temper are the same as ever: I am a little thinner indeed, but that I am not sorry for: I walk out and take the air, without any uneasiness; and the only reason of their sitting up with me is, because I cannot conveniently turn myself yet in my bed; but I sleep like a top. I must own this is a little uncomfortable, and that I find it so, but, my dear, we must suffer whatever it pleases God to inflict on us; and I may think myself very happy in being so well as I am, for you know what sort of thing a rheumatism is to deal with. As to your question, I will answer you in the words of Medea:

C'est ainsi qu'en partant je vous fais mes adieux *.

This I have done, and am told that I shall resume my beautiful health. I wish it may be so for your sake, my dear, and the love you bear me: besides, I should not be very unwilling myself to give you this pleasure. The good princess has paid me a visit to-day: she inquired if I had heard from you; I wished for your answer, to have given her. The indolence of a country life makes one attentive to these little things. I could not help blushing when this came into my head, and

* It is thus in parting I bid you adieu.

she reddened a little too. I should have been glad you had discharged that debt a little sooner on my account: she sets off on Wednesday, owing to the death of M. de Valois, and I shall set out on Tuesday, that I may sleep at Laval. I shall not write to you on Wednesday, so do not be uneasy at not hearing from me. But I shall write from Malicorne, where I intend to stay two days to rest myself: I begin already to feel the want of my little secretary.

You imagine that we have bad weather here; we have Provence weather here, but what surprises me is, that you have Britany weather with you: I supposed yours a thousand times finer, and you supposed ours a thousand times worse than it really is. I have made the most of the season, imagining we may have a return of winter in April or May, which I am accordingly going to pass in Paris. And now, had you but seen me play the sick and delicate lady in my bed-gown, my arm-chair, my pillows, and my night-cap, believe me, you would not have known me again for the person who used to dress so light and airily, without cap, cloak, or bonnet, and who never sat upon any thing but a folding chair; but this rheumatism has wrought a total change. I forgot to tell you that our uncle de Sévigné is dead. Madame de la Fayette now inherits her mother's fortune. M. du Plessis Guinégaut is dead also. You know what is necessary to be done with respect to his wife.

Corbinelli tells me, I lose all my wit and spirit, when I dictate: so that he will correspond with me no longer: I believe he is right; I find my style flat, be you more generous, my dear, and continue to charm me with your entertaining letters. I entreat you to calculate the moons during your pregnancy; if you lie in a single day after the ninth moon, your infant will live;

if not, do not expect a miracle. I shall set out on Tuesday; the roads are as good as in summer, but we have a sharp north-east wind that cuts my poor hands to pieces: I must have hot weather for them, steam is nothing: I am very well otherwise, and it is droll enough to see a woman, that looks well in the face, fed like an infant; but we become used to these inconveniences.

Adieu, my dearest: continue to love me, and receive in return the tenderest attachment that ever united parent to child. I felt our separation during my illness, and often thought, that it would have been a great comfort to have had you with me. I have given orders that your letters may find me at Malicorne. I embrace the count, or rather, I desire him to embrace me. I am wholly yours, and so is the good abbé, who is reckoning and calculating from morning till night, and is not a penny the richer for it, so completely has this province been fleeced

LETTER CCCC.

TO THE SAME.

Laval, Tuesday, March 24, 1676.

And why should I not write to you to-day, if I can? I set out this morning from the Rocks, in the most delightful weather: spring is opened in our woods. The little girl was taken away early in the morning to prevent the violent sallies of her grief: her sorrows are the sorrows of a child, but then they are so natural, they come so immediately from the heart, that it is impossible not to be affected with them; perhaps she may be dancing now. Two days ago she was a perfect fountain; I have given her no good example of self-

governance. To you only it belongs, my dear, to unite tenderness and resolution. I am very well, and behaved very well upon the road. The confinement of the carriage hurts my knees a little, but walking carries it off again. My hands, my poor hands, are still bad, but I am in hopes that the warm weather will cure them; it would give me no small joy. It is surprising to me, how people can accustom themselves to evils and inconvenience; if any one had told me, that I should have been able to endure the pain and fatigue I have undergone, I should not have believed it, and yet so it has been, and so it is.

The good abbé is very well; I shall write to you again from Malicorne, where I expect to find letters from you. Pray calculate the moons during your pregnancy; it will lead, perhaps, to a confirmation of your hopes respecting the life of your child. I embrace the count; and as to you, my dear child, when should I finish, were I to tell you all my thoughts, and all my affection for you?

LETTER CCCCI.

TO THE SAME.

Malicorne, Saturday, March 28, 1676.

I HAVE met two of your letters on the road, my dear child, which have afforded me no small degree of pleasure, as they give me fresh proofs of your affectionate regard for my health by the measures you advise me to adopt respecting it. In return for this, I assure you that I see no reason why the little Adhemar should not live a century, at least. You mention the 15th of June; upon reckoning the moons to the 11th of February, I find you had entered two days upon the ninth month;

that is sufficient. As to myself, the change of air, and the continuance of the fine weather, have done me a great deal of good: if I could stay here a week or ten days, the friendly attentions of madame de Lavardin would complete the cure; but a thousand things call me to Paris, both on your account, and my son's. Think of the waywardness of our fate: Talliard's marriage has prevented Viriville from purchasing the gouvernage: here are all our measures defeated at once: is not this very strange, or rather very cruel? Madame de la Baume strikes from afar.

If I go to Bourbon, and you join me there, that will be my true health, and I shall live this winter upon the hopes of seeing you. Madame de Lavardin thinks there is very little in the *Highness* of the princess de Tarente, and that there is no comparison between madame de Vaudemont, your friend, who is so far from any sovereignty, and the princess Emilie de Hesse, who has just left it; for since her widowhood, the title has not been contested. In short, I do not think I have committed you after these instances. Some other hand must finish, for mine will proceed no farther.

When I came here, madame de Lavardin spoke to me of M. Flechier's funeral oration. We read it together, and I ask M. de Tulle a thousand pardons, but I really think it superior to his. I think it more uniformly beautiful; I read it with astonishment, and can hardly comprehend how the same things can be expressed in such a different manner: in short, I was quite charmed with it. We were very glad of the news you sent us from Messina *, which carried an air of authority with

* Messina having been surrendered to France, owing solely to the factions that divided it, the Spanish party, which was still powerful, excited frequent seditions. The victories of Duquesne in the Mediterranean, kept the French there a long time, but in 1678 they evacuated

it, on account of your near neighbourhood. What madness could possess these people to have such an aversion to the poor French, who are the most polite and engaging people in the world? Always inform me of your tragic histories; never conceal any thing, for a state of suspense is worse than the most cruel certainty. Madame de Lavardin sends you a note, the answer to which, I will deliver more carefully than that to Bussy. The circuitous way you take to write to each other is very droll *. You know, I suppose, that M. de Coëtquen arrived at Paris, at the same time M. de Chaulnes did: the animosity that exists between them, and the complaints made by de Coëtquen, must furnish a fine scene, if the king would hear them together. I am likewise informed, that M. de Rohan has quitted the service, on not being made a brigadier; so we shall see the fashion of volunteers will return again. Adieu, my dearest countess, this is sufficient for to-day.

LETTER CCCCII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, April 8, 1676.

I AM dull and mortified, my dear child, at not being able to write all I wish. I begin to be impatient at this tedious delay. I am extremely well in health, the change of air has been of great service to me, but my hands cannot be persuaded to share in the recovery. I have seen all our friends, male and female. I keep my

it. The Spaniards again took possession of it; and this city became, as Naples has become in our day, the scene of the most atrocious revenge.

* These letters went from Burgundy to Paris, from Paris to Britany, from Britany to Provence, &c.

room, and observe your advice in making the care of my health my principal concern. The chevalier (de Grignan) comes and chats with me till eleven o'clock: he is very obliging. I got so far the better of his modesty, as to prevail on him to give me an account of his campaign; when we both shed tears to the memory of M. de Turenne. What think you of marshal de Lorges? Is he not fortunate? Honours, riches, and a pretty wife! she was educated as one destined to be in time a great lady. Fortune is a pretty goddess; but I cannot forgive her incivilities to ourselves.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI.

I AM just come in time, madam, to relieve this poor weak hand; but I shall resign the pen whenever it pleases. It was going to inform you of a droll speech of M. d'Armagnac's. There was a dispute concerning the places of the princes and dukes at the communion, which was thus regulated by his majesty: immediately after the princes of the blood, followed M. de Vermondois, and the ladies; the attendance of the rest of the dukes and princes of Lorraine being dispensed with: upon this, M. d'Armagnac took upon him to expostulate with his majesty on the arrangement, but the king giving him to understand that he would have it so, "Sire," replies M. d'Armagnac, "*le charbonier est le maître chez lui**." This was considered excellent by every one; we also think it so, and I am sure you will.

* The coalheaver is master in his own house.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

I DO not like to employ secretaries that have more wit than myself. I am afraid to make them write all my nonsense. The little girl was excellent on this account. I still intend to go to Bourbon; and cannot but wonder that any one should endeavour to dissuade me from it, since it is the advice of all the physicians.

I mentioned to d'Hacqueville yesterday, that you had said, you would come and pay me a visit there. I need not tell you how much I wish it, nor how much I regret passing my life thus without you. It seems as if we had another in store, for which we reserve the pleasure of seeing each other continually, and enjoying our mutual affection; but we are wasting the present, which is our all, and death closes the account: this is an affecting thought. But, notwithstanding the desire I have for your company, if you imagine the expense of the journey will be a means of preventing your coming here next winter, I would not have you think of it; I had rather not see you till then, for I have no hopes of going to Grignan. The good abbé will not go; he has a great deal of business here, and besides that is apprehensive of the climate. I find in referring to my treatise of ingratitude, that it will not be right to leave him at his age; and as I know a separation from me would be like that of soul and body, I should always reproach myself if he were to die in my absence. Consider, therefore, whether, for the pleasure of being together for three weeks, we should sacrifice that of spending the whole winter together; settle this in your mind, according to the plan and situation of your affairs; remembering at the same time that my affection, and the miserable state I have been in, call upon you

to give me all the comfort in your power, and the greatest of all comforts is that of seeing you. If you could come back with me here from Bourbon, it would be excellent; we would pass our autumn at Livri; and in the winter, M. de Grignan might come and see us, and take you away with him in the spring. This would be the easiest way, the most natural, and the most desirable for me. Think seriously of all this, there is no time to lose: I shall set out for Bourbon, or Vichi, next month.

You wish me to inform you particularly of my health; except some flying pains which I feel occasionally in my hands and knees, I am quite well. I sleep well, and eat well in moderation. I have no one to sit up with me, and I begin to feed myself with my left hand: it was the most ridiculous thing in the world to see me fed; and with regard to writing, you see my performance. I am told wonders in praise of Vichi, and I think I shall prefer it to Bourbon for two reasons; first, because madame de Montespan, they say, is going to Bourbon; and secondly, because Vichi is nearer to you; so that if you should come to me, you will have a less fatiguing journey, and if the *worthy* should change his mind we shall be nearer to Grignan. In short, my dear child, I cherish the sweet hope of seeing you; you must arrange every thing, but pray let me see you longer than a fortnight: it would not be worth while to take so much trouble, and have so much regret at parting with you again for so short a period. You laugh at Villebrune, but I have been advised here to do exactly as he advised me. I am going to foment my hands; and if you knew the agitation caused by the equinox, you would retract your errors. The *frater* will soon join his brigade, and from thence will go to *matins*. I have kept my room for six days, that I may recover

from the fatigue of my journey. I receive every body; the Soubises, the Sullys, have come to see me for your sake. I hear no mention of sending M. de Vendôme to Provence. Your residence there deserves that some dignity should be conferred on you; all your reasons are admirable, but it is not I who do not wish to go to Grignan.

The chevalier de Mirabeau has told us, how much you were affected with the news of my illness, and that six hours' grief had altered you so as scarcely to be known. You may judge, my dear, how sensibly I felt these unfeigned proofs of your affection. I have seen the duchess of Sault; she is extremely handsome, and as gay as a lark, which shows that she has passed all her life at church with her mother: her spirits are inconceivable: she is going into Dauphiné. Her husband seems melancholy; but that is attributed to his having left the service. It is said, and he begins to think so himself, that he ought not to have cared about being appointed lieutenant-general a year sooner or later. I only touch upon these subjects, and suppress half my thoughts on account of my poor hand. The princess de Tarente is expected here in a day or two. Madame has written to her very affectionately, calling her good aunt. About a week ago, M. de Vendôme said to the king, that he hoped after the campaign was ended, his majesty would permit him to go and take possession of the government he had done him the honour to give him. "Sir," replied the king, "when you know how to manage your own affairs, I will give you the charge of mine;" and there it ended.

Adieu, my dearest child. I take up the pen, and lay it down, ten times in writing a letter; do not fear therefore that I shall hurt my hand.

LETTER CCCCIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, April 10, 1676.

THE more I think of it, my child, the more I am against your paying me a visit only for a fortnight. If you come to Vichi or to Bourbon, it ought to be in your way hither, and we would spend the remainder of the summer and the autumn there. You should nurse, and comfort me, and M. de Grignan should come and see you in the winter, and dispose of you in his turn as he thought proper. It is thus you ought to visit a mother you love, it is thus you ought to comfort her after she has suffered a painful illness, and a thousand other inconveniences, and lost the flattering idea of being immortal. At present she begins to feel some little doubts, and is mortified to such a degree, as to believe, that she may some day occupy the bark of Charon, and that she is not exempted from his jurisdiction. In short, instead of the journey into Britany which you were so desirous to take, I only propose, and ask this of you.

My son is going away: I am very melancholy at the idea of this separation. Nothing is to be seen at Paris, but preparations for the campaign *; complaints of want of money are greater than usual, but I believe no one will stay behind now, any more than in former years. The chevalier has gone without bidding me adieu; he wished to avoid it, and has spared me a painful leave-taking, for I have a very sincere regard for him. You see that my hand-writing begins to resume

* A congress had been assembled at Nimeguen in July 1675. But, though it continued, peace was not the more advanced.

its usual character; I consider the cure of my hand chiefly to depend on it; it well knows, that I will excuse it for some time from any other exercise. I cannot yet lift any thing; a spoon seems a ponderous machine. I am still forced to submit to such regulations as are troublesome and mortifying; but I do not complain now I can write to you. The duchess de Sault visits me like one of my old friends; I think she likes me. She came twice with madame de Brissac. What a contrast there is between these two characters! the first would certainly please you. My hand is tired, and wishes to rest: I owe it this complaisance, for the favour it has rendered me.

CONTINUED BY M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Je vais partir de cette ville;
Je m'en vais Mercredi, tout droit à Charleville,
Malgré le chagrin qui m'attend *.

I DID not think it necessary to finish the stanza, because all my history is comprehended in these three lines. You cannot conceive the joy it gives me, to see my mother's health so much restored. I still insist on it, that you ought to come and see her at Bourbon; you may return with her, and stay here till M. de Grignan returns, to give a new lustre to your beauties, and make you appear, in the Castillan language,

La gala del pueblo,
La flor del Avril †.

If you follow my advice, you will be happier than I am; you will see my mother, without the pain of part-

* I am leaving this town; I shall set out on Wednesday for Charleville, in spite of all the vexations that attend me.

† The pride of the village, the flower of April.

ing from her in two or three days, a pain that is usually accompanied with other uneasinesses easy to be imagined. I am again guidon, guidon eternally, guidon with a grey beard; what comforts me is, that all things in this world have an end, and there is no probability that this is an exception to the general rule. Adieu, my beautiful little sister; wish me a happy journey: I fear the interested soul of M. de Grignan will forbid you this kind wish; but I think, notwithstanding, you will both be glad to see me again.

LETTER CCCCIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, April 15, 1676.

I AM very melancholy, my dear; my poor boy is just gone; he has so many little social virtues that are the charm of society, that were he only an acquaintance I should regret his loss. He desired me over and over again to tell you, that he forgot to take notice to you of the story of your Proteus, who was at one time a capuchin, at another time a galley-slave; he was highly amused at it. It is supposed we are going to undertake the siege of Cambray; this is so extraordinary a step, that every one thinks we have had intelligence with some one in the place. If we lose Philipsburgh, it will be very difficult to repair the breach: *vederemo*, we shall see. But till we reason and make almanacs, all of which end with *the king's star will prevail.*

At length marshal Bellefond has cut the thread that tied him here. Sanguin has purchased his place* for 55,000 livres, and a brevet de retenue of 350,000. This

* Of premier maître d'hotel, or lord chamberlain, to the king.

is a fine settlement, and an assurance of a cordon bleu *. M. de Pomponne has paid me a very cordial visit: all your friends have exerted themselves wonderfully. I do not go out yet. The cold winds retard the cure of my hands, and yet I write better than I did, as you may see. I turn myself at night on my left side; I eat with my left hand: these are left-handed performances. My face is very little altered; you would soon discover that you have seen it somewhere before; it is because I have not been bled, and have endeavoured to get cured of my illness without such remedies. I thank you for mentioning the pigeons to me. Where has the little one acquired this timidity? I am afraid you will throw the blame upon me: you cast a suspicious eye towards me. This humour will, I dare say, pass off, and you will not be obliged to make a monk of him. I am resolved to go to Vichi; they have set me against Bourbon on account of the air. The maréchale d'Etrées wishes me to go to Vichi; she says it is a delightful country. I have told you what I think of that affair; either resolve to return hither with me, or do not come at all; for a fortnight will only disturb me with constant thoughts of a separation, and will be on the whole a foolish and useless expense. You know how dear the sight of you is to me; so take your own measures.

I wish you had finished the bargain about your estate: M. de Pomponne tells me it is raised to a marquisate. I desired him to make it a dukedom: he assured me it would give him great pleasure to do so, and that he would use all expedition in drawing up the patents. This is a considerable step. I am delighted to hear the pigeons are so well. How does the little tiny

* M. de Sanguin was not created a knight of the king's order at the promotion in 1688, but the marquis de Livri his son, who was premier maître d'hotel, was comprehended in that of 1724.

or rather the great fat one do? I love him dearly, for resolving to live against wind and tide. But I cannot forget my little girl *; I suppose you will determine on putting her to Saint Marie, according to the resolutions you adopt this summer; all depends upon that. You seem satisfied with the devotions of Passion and Easter weeks: you shut yourself up at Grignan. For my part, my thoughts were not affected with any thing; I had no object to strike the sense: I ate meat till Good Friday, and had only the comfort of being very distant from any opportunity of committing sin. I told La Mousse you remembered him; and he advises you to make the most of your man of wit. Adieu, my dear child.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI.

I ALWAYS come in at a fortunate time to relieve this poor hand, which was just going to tell you that the good princess de Tarente has been here, and that she is so full of business, and so stunned with the noise of Paris, that I could not say any thing to her about your answer. We mutually regret the tranquillity of the Rocks. But I am weary of acting the secretary, and so I will talk to you a little myself.

Your good mother mentioned the project of Cambray to you, but very slightly. This is what the politicians say of the affair. It is certain that our troops are all distributed to different parts; some are before Cambray, others before Ypres; and others are sent towards Brussels, whither Vandrai has been dispatched. The design of this is, to amuse the allies, and to prevent them from forming a strong army by the junction of their several garrisons. But what is considered the worst, is sending

* Marie-Blanche d'Adhémar, born the 15th November 1670.

a secretary of state * to assemble the troops, and carry orders himself to all parts. M. de Crequi is at Cambray; M. de Humieres at Ypres, but as to the rest, their destination is still known only to the king. The day of his departure was kept secret till Monday on leaving the council-room. The duke of Luxembourg has declared against us, and furnished the Imperialists with five or six thousand men: the princes, his brothers, are of little consequence, that is, the duke of Hanover †, and the bishop of Osnabruck. We have demanded the infanta of Bavaria ‡ for the dauphin; but since her mother's § death, the king of Spain has demanded her likewise, and it is believed that he will obtain her, for the good elector wishes to espouse the king of Poland's widow ||, who is sister to the emperor (Leopold). If M. de Marseilles could have parried this stroke, I should have said something to him.

The king has ordered the parliament to make out a commission, for a counsellor of the high chamber to repair to Rocroi and examine madame de Brinvilliers; for they will not have her brought hither to be examined, because most of the gentlemen of the robe are related in some way or other to that unhappy woman.

* M. de Louvois.

† His late majesty George I.

‡ Mary-Anne-Victoria of Bavaria, married in 1680 to Lewis dauphin of France.

§ Henrietta Adelaide of Savoy, who died the 18th of March, 1676.

|| Cleonora-Maria of Austria; widow to Michael Viesnoviski.

LETTER CCCCV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, April 17, 1676.

Thank God I do not write very badly, my dear; at least, I answer for the first two or three lines, for you must know that my hands, I mean my right hand, will not render its assistance to any thing but writing to you; I love it the better for it. If it is offered a spoon, it desires to be excused, and shakes and spills every thing in it: offer it any thing else, it is just the same, it refuses flat and plain, and thinks I am already sufficiently obliged to it. In fact, this is all the service I require of it: I am extraordinarily patient, and wait for relief from the warm weather and Vichi. Since I have been informed there is a pump there, and a bath, and that the waters are as good as at Bourbon, the clearness of the air and the beauty of the country have determined me to give the preference to it, and to set out as soon as I possibly can. I have told you so often that I will not have your company if I cannot enjoy it longer than a fortnight, that you must settle the rest. You know my heart, but I must not believe implicitly in every thing it wishes; you are better acquainted than I am with the possibilities and impossibilities.

The king left Paris yesterday, but it is not absolutely known what siege he is going to undertake. I have seen M. de Pomponne; he desires me to make you a thousand compliments for him. I have been at mademoiselle de Meri's, who has charming apartments, and extremely well furnished: there is no leaving her rooms, they are so pleasant. The Villars are very dull at marshal de Bellefond's absolute resignation. I have been

out but three times ; does not that please you ? My activity is quite over ; ask Corbinelli, for here he is.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI.

INDEED, madam, it is true, she is very good, and so completely altered, that she is rather the image of indolence than activity, unless when you and your affairs are in question. This refreshing calm is one of the best remedies she could have had ; and she seems already to have a taste for indolence : I, who make it my ruling passion, rejoice at it, as it must be of great service to your excellent mother. But stay, she interrupts me to dictate two or three witticisms of madame de Cornuel's, which made M. de Pomponne burst into those fits of laughter that you have so often witnessed. Madame de Cornuel, seeing madame de Lionne with some very large diamonds in her ears, said, in her presence too ; " These large diamonds look like bacon in a mouse-trap."

The other day she was with some young men, and said, " she thought she was among dead people, for they smelled very offensively, and said nothing."

Third witticism. In speaking of the countess de Fiesque, she said, " that she preserved her beauty by being pickled in folly." Besides an infinite number of others, which were spoken with so much indifference and unconcern, that they were the more entertaining.

I need not tell you, I suppose, that madame de Montespan set out yesterday morning at six o'clock, either for Clagni, or Maintenon ; which of the two, is a secret ; but we all know that she is to return on Saturday to St. Germain, from whence she will go the latter end of the month to Nevers, till the season for taking the waters.

There is a great talk of the siege of Condé, which is

to be finished as soon as possible, in order to send the troops into Germany, and curb the insolence of the Imperialists, who cannot be brought to abandon Philipsburg. The chief affairs in Europe are on that side. We must all have the glory of the treaty of Munster; or at least, keep the empire from taking advantage of it. Not but that the charms of the princess of Bavaria have a great share in our disputes; for all the princes that are marriageable, aspire to her hand, and we shall some day see her the heroine of, at least, a dozen romances.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

This has been a great relief to my hand, but I am sorry I have nothing left to tell you. Do not you think madame de Cornuel's witticisms excellent? Adieu, my dearest child; I feel for you the most perfect and tender affection, you are worthy of it, and it is absolute vanity to boast of my love for you.

LETTER * CCCCVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, March 22, 1676.

You have passed the Jubilate, and are no longer stationary: how well you express yourself upon this subject! You are not tired of devotion, but of the want of it. Ah! good heavens! this it is that drives us to despair. I think I feel this misfortune more sensibly than any one: it seems as if every thing would inspire me with devotion, but efforts and reflection very little advance the work. I supposed M. de la Vergne a Jansenist; but by the praises you bestow on him for admir-

ing the Moral Essays, I see plainly that he is not one of our *brethren*. Are you not pleased with the treatise on the Resemblance of Self-love and Charity ? It is my favourite. Grace it is true is very triumphant in the two daughters of Desœillets * : they must have had an especial call. I shall be very glad to see M. de Monaco ; but I wish him to come soon, that he may have seen you the more recently. Madame de Vins is not with child ; but she is so altered that I shall advise her to say she is. She is the best creature in the world, and pays me great attention. My health continues good. I am a thousand leagues from a dropsy, and have never had the slightest tendency to one : but I have no hope of the cure of my hands, shoulders, and knees, but from Vichi, so rudely have my poor nerves been afflicted with the rheumatism. I think of nothing now but my departure. The abbé Bayard and Saint Hérem are expecting me there : I told you the beauty of the country and the walks, and the fineness of the air, had borne the palm from Bourbon. I have seen the best ignoramuses here, who advise such different remedies for my hands, that, in order to make them agree, I use not one of them ; and I think myself very fortunate that they are of the same opinion with regard to Vichi and Bourbon. After this journey, I think you may resume the idea of health and gaiety which you have laid by for me. With regard to plumpness, I do not imagine I shall ever be as I have been : my shape is now so finely cut, that I do not think it can alter, and as for my face, it is quite ridiculous that it should still remain as it is. Your little brother is gone, and I am grieved : you have guessed rightly what it is that keeps him still, to his great regret, a guidon. M. de Viri-

* A celebrated actress.

ville has complained to the king, and has I believe obtained permission for his daughter to change her convent. He came to see me on the day I did a very foolish thing: I went to dine at Livri with Corbinelli; the weather was divine; and I walked delightfully till five in the evening, and then returned full of renovated strength and health.

If mademoiselle de Méri will accompany me to Vichi, I shall be very glad to have her with me. I have refused madame de Longueval (the canoness), that I may be at liberty: she will go with madame de Brissac, which she will prefer, and we shall all meet together. We pretend to find fault with this arrangement, but it is only to laugh at the duchess. *Quanto* was to go to Bourbon, but the plan is altered; and this induces her good friend to return sooner than was expected. Her female friend has taken her to her country house to spend a few days; we shall see what places she will honour with her presence. Madame de Coulanges is always amiable, and so much more so as she shows less eagerness than ever for the affections of that country, whose value she well knows. The abbé Têtu is still delighted with her correspondence, and returns with pleasure all her epigrams. The cousin * is still in great subjection; but he appears to me a broken rib, since the assiduity he paid for three months to the charmer's † old mistress. That made our fair friend, on the cousin's return, considered as a slighted damsel; but though it was not true, the personage was disagreeable. Mesdames d'Heudicourt, de Ludre, and de Grammont, paid me a visit yesterday. Your friends show their regard for you, by the attentions they pay me. M. de la Trousse is not to join the army of marshal de

* The marquis de la Trousse.

† The duke de Villeroi, afterwards marshal of France.

Rochefort for a fortnight; all the rest are gone long ago. The poor guidon fancied himself really in love with madame de Pont when he went away. Corbinelli is still a grey wolf, as you know, appearing, disappearing, and good for nothing: our friendship is as firm as ever. I shall make known your reproaches to La Mousse: he is at home, is very unsociable, difficult to find, and still more difficult to keep. He is often dissatisfied; he had a quarrel with my son, of which he is very much ashamed, for he was so cruel to himself as not to have a particle of reason on his side. Madame de Sanzei is as melancholy as Andromache; Saint Aubin and his Iris in their faubourgs, and in heaven; d'Hacqueville is whirling in the vortex of human affairs, and replete with every virtue; madame de la Fayette, with her feverish habit, has always select parties at her house; M. de la Rochefoucault is just the same as you have always seen him. The prince is going to Chantilly; this is not the year for great generals, for which reason Montecuculi has not taken the field. The good La Troche says, that she is going to Anjou; she is as kind as ever, continually going and coming: she is called the female d'Hacqueville. M. de Marseilles will be very much surprised to find his abbé de la Vergne so delighted with you. You are fortunate in having had Guitaut; you were good friends wherever you met; I can conceive upon what terms you are at Aix: he is an amiable man, and a pleasant companion; remember me to him with kindness. I thank M. de Grignan for liking my letters; I doubt whether his taste be good. Be not alarmed at the length of this, I have laid it down and resumed it several times.

LETTER CCCCVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, April 24, 1676.

My hands are still very troublesome. Old de Lorme advises me not to set out till the end of May, but every body is going, and the house I intended to take has slipped through my hands: he is for my going to Bourbon, but that is mere cabal, so I shall adhere to my resolution of going to Vichi. If your affairs would have permitted you to have joined me there, and to have returned from thence and have spent the autumn and part of the winter with me, and then for M. de Grignan to have come and taken you home with him, it would have been a real pleasure to me; but I am willing to believe you could not manage it, as you did not listen to the proposal. If mademoiselle de Méri had been prepared for taking the water, I should have been delighted to take her with me, as she may have told you; but Brayer wishes her to take some cooling medicine first. Madame de Saint Geran too is quite out of the question, on account of her husband's departure, and her zeal for devotion. Send some little remembrance to her and to madame de Villars; they both love you, and are uncommonly attentive to me. M. de Villars * is going ambassador to Savoy, whither his wife will soon follow him. We have no news from Condé, except of the loss of eight or ten men, and that maréchal d'Humieres has had his hat shot through: God grant this may be the worst we may have. I have seen M. de Périer, who

* The marquis de Villars was at that time appointed ambassador extraordinary in Savoy.

told me, that you heard the news of my being laid up with the rheumatism while you were at cards, and that it made you shed tears: how can I withhold mine at such inestimable proofs of your affection? I cannot describe the emotion of my heart at hearing this. All Provence was in anxiety for my health, on account of the uneasiness it occasioned you. Is it possible to love too tenderly a child by whom I am so much beloved? But, to tell you the truth, I do not think I am ungrateful.

Adieu, my dear, my amiable child, your letters are my greatest pleasure, till you can give me a more substantial one.

LETTER CCCCVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, April 29, 1676.

I MUST begin by telling you that Condé was taken by storm on Saturday night. The news at first made my heart beat; I feared the victory had cost us dear, but it does not prove so; we have lost some men, but none of any note; this may be reckoned a complete happiness. Larei, the son of M. Lainé, who was killed in Candia, or his brother, is dangerously wounded. You see how soon our old heroes are forgotten.

Madame de Brinvilliers is not so comfortable as I am; she is in prison, and endeavours to pass her time there as pleasantly as she can; she desired yesterday to play at piquet, because she was dull. Her confession has been found: it informs us, that at the age of seven years, she ceased to be a virgin; that she had ever since gone on at the same rate; that she had poisoned her father, her brothers, one of her children, and

herself; but the last was only to make trial of a counter-poison. Medea was a saint compared with her. She has owned this confession to be her own writing: it was an unaccountable folly; but she says she was in a high fever when she wrote it, and that it was an act of madness or phrensy, which does not deserve a serious thought.

The queen has been twice at the Carmelites with madame de Montespan. The latter set on foot a lottery; she collected every thing that could be useful to the nuns; this was a great novelty and amusement in the convent. She conversed a long time with sister Louise* de la Misericorde, and asked her, whether it was really true, that she was as happy there as it had been generally reported. She replied, "I am not happy, but I am contented." Quanto talked to her a great deal of the brother of Monsieur; and asked her, if she had no message to send him, and what she should say to him for her. She replied in the sweetest tone and manner possible, though perhaps a little piqued at the question; "Whatever you please, madam, whatever you please." Fancy this to be expressed with all the grace, spirit, and modesty, which you so well understand. Quanto afterwards wished for something to eat, and sent to purchase some ingredient that was necessary for a sauce she prepared herself, and which she ate with a wonderful appetite. I tell you the simple fact without the least embellishment. When I think of the letter you wrote me last year about M. de Vivonne, I consider all I send you as a burlesque. To what lengths will not folly lead a man who thinks himself deserving of such exaggerated praise!

You congratulate me upon the hopes I have of find-

* Madame de la Vallière.

ing madame de Brissac at Vichi, and you ask me, what entertainment I can promise myself from her. I have made choice of her, my dear, to teach me simplicity and sincerity in conversation. If I had had my son with me the other day, whom I might have employed as my secretary, I would have sent you a sketch of the superficial conversation she entertained us with in this room.

You say, my dear, you have taken, in idea, the remedies prescribed to you; you are very fortunate: I wish I could be bled in idea; for they say it is a necessary preparative to my drinking the waters.

TO M. DE GRIGNAN.

I ASSURE you, my dear count, I should be a thousand times more pleased with the favour you mention, than with one conferred by his majesty. You comprehend the extreme desire I have to see your wife. Without being a coal-heaver, you are more master in your own house than all the coal-heavers in the world, and no man is superior to you in any respect whatever. But be generous; and, when she has acted the part of a good wife a little longer, lead her to me in your own hand, and bid her act that of a good daughter. It is thus a man of honour acquits himself of his duties; and this is the only way to restore me to health, and to life.

TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

How strange it is, that you are still talking of Cambray! We shall have taken another town before you will have heard of the taking of Condé. What think you of the favour fortune has done us, in bringing our friend the Turk into Hungary? Corbinelli is much

pleased with it: I shall have a warm dispute with him upon the subject. I admire the coadjutor's devotion; if he has any to spare, he may send it to the handsome abbé. I feel the departure of my grand-daughter: is she sorry at being placed in a convent?

I know not whether Vardes will wish to dispose of his post in imitation of the marshal (de Bellefond). I pity him sincerely; you interpret his sentiments amiss: it is in vain for him to speak honestly, you will not believe a word he says: you are wicked. He has just written me a very affectionate letter, which I take in the literal sense, because I am good. Here comes M. de Coulanges, who will tell you in what way madame de Brinvilliers has attempted to destroy herself.

CONTINUED BY M. DE COULANGES.

She thrust a stick, not into her eye, nor into her ear, nor into her mouth; I leave you to guess where; but she would certainly have died, if timely assistance had not been rendered her. I am delighted, madam, that you were pleased with the poems. I expect M. de Bandol's return with impatience, to know what reception you gave the poem, entitled, Tobit. He must certainly have had the address to impart it to you, without offence to the purity of a soul, which you have so newly washed in the salutary streams of the Jubilate. Your mother is going to Vichi: I shall not accompany her, because my health has been better for some time. Neither do I think I shall go to Lyons: so that you must bring your beautiful face to Paris, if you expect a kiss from me. I salute M. de Grignan, and inform him I have contrived, should M. de Lussan gain his suit, that he may thank me for it, if he thinks proper.

LETTER CCCCIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, May 1, 1676.

I BEGIN by thanking M. de Grignan a thousand times for the pretty gown he has sent me, I never saw a prettier one in my life; I am going to have it made up for the winter, to treat you with it. I often think, as well as you, of the evenings we passed together last winter: but pray, what should prevent us from passing this winter in the same way, if you are not against it? Every one here is struck with amazement at your picture; it is certainly much improved, the colours are grown stronger, and it is now a finished piece: if you suspect my veracity, come and see it yourself. A report has been in circulation these two or three days, of which every one comes to me to know the truth. It is said that M. de Grignan has orders to turn the vice-legate neck and shoulders out of Avignon: I shall not believe a syllable of it till I hear it from you. The Grignans will have the honour of being excommunicated the first, if this noble war should begin; for the abbé Grignan has had orders from his majesty to forbid the bishops from visiting the nuncio.

I am in no hurry about setting out, for I know that June is a better month than May for drinking the waters, and so I shall begin my journey about the eleventh of next month. Madame de Montespan is on her way to Bourbon: madame de Thianges accompanies her as far as Nevers, where she is to be met by the duke and duchess of that place. My son informs me, they are going to besiege Bouchain with part of the army, while the king, with the main body, is to wait for the prince

of Orange, and give him battle. The chevalier d'Humieres has been out of the Bastile this week; this he owes to his brother. Nothing is talked of here, at present, but the strange conversation and conduct of madame de Brinvilliers: could one have thought she would have been afraid of forgetting the murder of her father at confession? The peccadilloes, too, that she was afraid of forgetting, were admirable. She was in love, it seems, with this Sainte Croix, and wished to marry him, and, for that purpose, gave her husband poison several times *. Sainte Croix, who did not wish to have a wife as wicked as himself, gave the poor husband a dose of counter-poison; so that, after being bandied about five or six times, sometimes poisoned, sometimes counter-poisoned, he is at last actually making intercession for his dear wife. Oh! there is no end of some people's follies.

I went to Vincennes yesterday with the Villars's: his excellency sets out to-morrow for Savoy, and desired me to kiss your left hand for him. These ladies† love you very much: pray mention them when you write to me, by way of reward for their kindness. Adieu, my dear and amiable child, I shall say no more today.

* This romantic circumstance appears to be unfounded. The sentence of the parliament on Brinvilliers makes no mention of this crime. It includes only the father, the two brothers, and the sister, of this atrocious woman. Extraordinary as an event may be, the public voice loves to make it appear still more so by additional circumstances. The first moment is not the one to ascertain the real truth. Madame de Sévigné has the merit of relating very few of these uncertain anecdotes. Voltaire, whose authority is always good, says that Brinvilliers did not attempt her husband's life, who made allowances for an amour, of which he was the cause.

† Mesdames de Villars and St. Geran.

LETTER CCCCX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, May 4, 1676.

It is you, then, my child, that refuse to come and spend the summer with me; and not M. de Grignan! As you are a reasonable person, and as I cannot but think you have some wish to see me, you must certainly have found some impossibilities in the proposal I made to you which I could not discover: but you may rest assured that I should come to Grignan, had not the good abbé, who accompanies me from pure kindness, some affairs on his hands that would oblige him to return again very speedily, and of which mine make a part. My proposal was therefore a very natural one, for, to see you for a fortnight only at Vichi, would be a pleasure attended with too much pain.

Pray tell me honestly your reasons, and your plans for next winter; for I can never think you intend to let it pass, without affording me the comfort and happiness of embracing you. I will let you know the day I set out, and will enclose a direction for writing to me.

You see I write tolerably well: I imagine my hands will soon be well, but I feel myself so full of humours by the continual perspirations I am subjected to, that I compare myself to a spunge that wants to be squeezed. The fear of having a second time in my life, the amusement of a rheumatism, would make me take a much longer journey than from hence to Vichi.

You ask me what I do. Why, I take an airing very frequently; one day I go to the races with Villars; at another time I pay a visit to the Fauxbourgs, and then I rest a while. I have been to Mignard's: he has

painted M. de Turenne upon his piebald charger; it is one of the finest things that ever were seen. Cardinal de Bouillon came to me, and desired that, if I was at leisure, I would go and see this masterpiece: Miguard's imagination has done even more than his pencil.

I have had another conversation of two hours with M. du Périer; I am never tired of the subject of Provence: I made him tell me a thousand things relative to you, especially about your games, at which you lose so much money, and your operas, where you ruminate so finely. I made him tell me all the *squibs* of the procurators, and how you restored peace to Provence, and about the first president, and La Tour d'Aigues; and a thousand other things. In short, I have refreshed my memory with every thing that a week's fever had made me forget, for you know I have been subject to so many wanderings, that my poor brain often confounded truth with falsehoods.

LETTER CCCCXI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, May 6, 1676.

My heart is almost broken about my poor grand-daughter *, she will be inconsolable at being separated from you, and confined, as you say, in prison: I am astonished how I had the courage to place you there, but the thoughts of seeing you frequently, and of taking you from thence when I chose, made me determine upon this barbarity, which was then thought a prudent step, as being requisite to your education. In short,

* She was lately placed in the convent of the nuns of St. Mary of Aix. See Letter of the 15th of April.

we must follow the destinations of Providence, which disposes of us all as it pleases. Madame de Gué, the nun, is going to Chelles. She carries a very handsome allowance with her, that she may want for nothing; but I fancy she will change her station again, unless a young man *, who is the physician of the cloister, prevails on her to fix her residence there; I saw him yesterday at Livri. My dear child, he is eight and twenty, with the finest countenance I ever saw; eyes like madame de Mazarin's, teeth like ivory, and the rest of his person like—like—Rinaldo: fine flowing black locks adorn the prettiest head you would wish to see; he is an Italian, and speaks Italian, as you may suppose. He remained at Rome till the age of twenty-two, and M. de Nevers and the duchess at length brought him over to France, and M. de Brissac has established him in the charming abbey of Chelles, of which madame de Brissac his sister is abbess. He has a garden of medicinal herbs in the convent, but trust me, he has very little of a *Lamporechio* † in him. I fancy most of the young nuns will like him, and consult him in all their disorders, but I would take the sacrament that he will not cure one of them, in any other way than the strict rules of Hippocrates. Madame de Coulanges, who is just come from Chelles, thinks of him as I do. In short, all the handsome musicians at Thoulongeon's ‡ are mere frights to him. You cannot imagine how this little adventure has delighted us.

A word about the little marquis (de Grignan); I beseech you not to be under any apprehension about his timidity. Remember, that the charming marquis (de

* Amonio.

† See La Fontaine's Tale of Mazet de Lamporechio.

‡ Elder brother to the count de Grammont, and a remarkably pleasant man.

la Châtre) used to tremble and quake till he was twelve years old, and that La Troche, when young, was so terrified at the least thing, that his mother could not bear to have him in her sight; and yet you see how much they have distinguished themselves since: let that comfort you. Fears of this kind are the mere effect of childhood, and when childhood is surmounted, instead of being afraid of raw-head and bloody bones, these personages are afraid only of being thought fearful, are afraid of being less esteemed than others, and that is sufficient to make them brave, and kill their thousands and ten thousands: let me then again beg you to make yourself easy on that score. As to his shape, it is another matter: I would advise you to put him into breeches, and then you will see better how his legs go on, and whether they are straightened as he grows. You must let him have room to stir himself, and unfold his little limbs: but you must put him on a pretty tight vest, which will confine his shape. I shall receive some farther instructions, however, on this subject, which I will not fail to transmit to you. It would be a fine thing indeed, to see a Grignan with a bad shape! Do you not remember how pretty he was in his swaddling-clothes? I am no less uneasy than yourself at this alteration.

I must have been dreaming when I told you madame de Thianges accompanied her sister part of the way; there was only madame la maréchale de Rocheforte, and the marchioness de la Valliere, and they saw her as far as Essonne. She is now quite alone, and what is more, will meet with nobody at Nevers. If she had had a mind to have taken all the ladies at the court with her, she had nothing to do but to speak. But another word respecting *the friend* (madame de Maintenon); she is still more triumphant than the lady we have

been speaking of; every thing is subject to her will; — all the attendants of her neighbour (the queen) are devoted to her; one presents her with her box of paste, kneeling; another brings her gloves; a third lulls her to sleep; she salutes no one, and, I believe, in her heart, laughs very heartily at the parade. It is impossible, at present, to judge, how matters stand between her and her female friend.

The town is full of nothing but La Brinvilliers. Caumartin made a very foolish speech about the stick with which she endeavoured, ineffectually, to kill herself. "It was like Mithridates," he said: now you know he was proof against poison, and I need not lead you farther into the application. Your application to my hand, of "Go, go, the complaint is vain*," made me laugh heartily, for the dialogue is complete, and my hand answers, "Ah, barbarian, what cruelty!"—"Go," I reply; "finish my writings, I will avenge myself for all I have suffered."—"What!" says my hand, "will you be inexorable?" And I finish by saying, "It is you, cruel wretch, who have taught me to be so." What humour you possess, my dear child, and how you would make me laugh, if I could visit you this summer at Grignan! But I must not think of it, for the *worthy* is overwhelmed with business: I reserve this pleasure for another year, and I hope you will come to see me before this year is passed.

I have been at the opera with madame de Coulanges, madame d'Heudicourt, M. de Coulanges, the abbé de Grignan, and Corbinelli. Oh! there are some admirable things in this opera (Atys). The scenery is beyond all description, the dresses are superb, and there are some very beautiful parts in it; there is a scene of

* See Act II. Scene II. of the opera of Alceste.

sleep, and dreams, the invention of which is surprising. The symphony consists entirely of bass, and the sounds are so lulling, that we admire Baptiste more than ever. But Atys is played by the same person who played the Fury and the Nurse; so that we always think we see the same droll characters in Atys. There are five or six new dancers that are equal to Faure, and they are a sufficient attraction to me; but, upon the whole, the town seems to like Alceste better; you shall judge for yourself, for you will certainly come for my sake, notwithstanding your want of curiosity. To be sure, it is a strange thing not to have seen Trianon; how can I, after that, propose to you to visit the Pont du Garde?

You will find the gentleman, whose adventure you have so easily divined, exactly the same as you have always seen him at the lady's: but it appears to me as if the combat ceased for want of champions *. The reproaches were founded upon pride, rather than jealousy: but when dryness is added to what was before dry, it confirms an indifference, inseparable from long attachments. I sometimes hear short and harsh replies, and I think they begin to feel the want of similarity of tastes and dispositions; but, notwithstanding all this, there is a considerable intimacy, and even friendship, which may last twenty years longer. The lady is really very pretty; I receive great attentions from her, and am not ungrateful. Women are worth their weight in gold.

The countess de Fiesque was insisting the other day to madame de Cornuel, that Combourg was no fool; upon which, madame de Cornuel said to her, "My good countess, you are like people who have eaten garlick."

* This refers to the intimacy between madame de Coulanges and the marquis de la Trousse.

Was not that excellent? M. de Pomponne has written to desire me, not to forget to write down all madame de Cornuel's witticisms.

We shall set out on Monday; I shall not go through Fontainbleau, on account of the grief I suffered at parting from you there, and I have no desire to go there again except to meet you. I fear our correspondence will be a little interrupted now; this vexes me; for your letters are my greatest amusement, and you write as Faure dances. How I pity you, my dear, for being obliged to take filthy medicine blacker than ever! My little powder of antimony is the prettiest thing in the world; it is the staff of life, as old de Lorme says; but by the bye, I must tell you, that I disobey good M. de Lorme a little, for he wishes me to go to Bourbon, but the experience of a thousand people, the fine air, and less company, determine me to go to Vichi. The good Escars goes with me, to my great joy. My fingers will not close yet, and I have a pain in my knees and shoulders; in short, I am so full of serosities, as they are called, that I must absolutely have these marshes drained, which can only be done by drinking warm chalybeate waters, and then I think I shall do pretty well.

The journey to Aigues-Mortes must have been very pleasant, and you were a lazy creature not to be of the party. I have a very good opinion of your conversations with the abbé de la Vergne, so long as you keep clear of the bishop of Marseilles. Madame de Brissac's devotion was a fine farce; I will tell you more about her from Vichi: the canoness * has the direction of her conscience at present, and she, I am persuaded, will

* Madame de Longueval, canoness of the abbey St. Mary of Aix. She was sister to the maréchale d'Estrées, and M. de Manicamp.

tell me every thing. I have been bled this morning; this is really a serious affair! but I am now quite ready to set out.

LETTER CCCCXII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, May 8, 1676.

I SHALL set out on Monday, my dear child. Madame de Vins has gained a great part of her cause, in spite of M. de Emboële, who signalised himself in his opposition to her The good princess (de Tarente) is enraged with M. d'Ormesson, who has the management of M. de la Trémouille's affairs, because he will not allow her a certain addition, to the injury of the former creditors. She wept heartily to me just now, and told me, at the same time, how rudely she was treated by madame de Monaco. But Madame seems very fond of the good aunt, and sputters German with her finely, which does not a little vex Monaco.

My God! can it be true that La Simiane is going to be parted from her husband, on account of his gallantries? What folly! I should have advised her rather to have paid him in his own coin. I am told she is coming here, and that she is going to Britany. Is all this true? I take my leave of you for the present, my dear, as this is not the day for our great dispatches. This post is a detestable thing: the letters are in town, and yet they will not distribute them till to-morrow; so that there are two to answer at once.

I am so well, that I forgot to tell you I took de Lorme's powders after being bled, that they agreed with me wonderfully, and that I am now ready to take my departure.

LETTER CCCCXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Sunday evening, May 10, 1676.

I SHALL set out to-morrow morning by day-break, and this evening madame de Coulanges, and her husband, M. de la Trousse, mademoiselle de Montgeron, and Corbinelli, are to sup with me, and to take their leave of me, by eating a pigeon-pie. The good d'Escars goes with me, and as the *worthy* finds that he may trust my health in her hands, he has very prudently spared himself the fatigue of the journey, and waits my return here, where he has a thousand affairs that require his presence: he will be very impatient till I come back, for let me tell you, that this separation, trifling as it is, costs him a good deal, and I am under some apprehensions respecting his health: the heart-ache is not good for old people; I shall therefore do all in my power to return as speedily as possible, since it is the only time in my life that I have had an opportunity of proving my gratitude for his kindness, by sacrificing to him even the idea of going to Grignan. This is exactly one of those cases in which love must give way to gratitude.

You will be entitled to five or six hundred pistoles from our uncle de Sévigné's legacy *; I wish you had them ready against the winter, for I well know the inconveniences you must be driven to by the great expenses you are obliged to incur, and therefore shall not urge the journey to Paris, persuaded that you love me sufficiently to wish to be with me at any rate. You

* See Letter of 22d March.

know, likewise, my sentiments on that subject, and how wretched my life appears to me while deprived of the sight of one I so dearly love. It would be a provoking circumstance, if M. de Grignan should be obliged to pass the summer at Aix, besides a great expense, if it was only on account of play, which is a very considerable article with you. Fortune is strangely capricious: M. de la Trousse is supported by gaming.

You tell me you have found it necessary to be bled; the trembling hand of your young surgeon makes me tremble. The prince said one day to a new surgeon, "Does not the idea of bleeding me make you tremble?" —"Faith, sir," replied the man, "your highness has most reason to tremble." He was in the right. So you have left off your coffee; mademoiselle de Méri has likewise driven it from her house in disgrace. After such a reverse, who would ever depend upon fortune? I am persuaded things that heat do not keep their ground so long as cooling things: I must return to them, at least; indeed all my disorders have arisen from an internal fever, which must be destroyed by the waters of Vichi, and then I am to return to a cooling regimen of fruits, salads, &c. &c. Let me advise you to pursue the same plan, rather than burn yourself up as you do. I request this favour of you for the sake of your own life, and that nothing may interrupt the comfort of mine.

I am now going to bed, my dear child; my little party has left me. Mesdames Pomponne, de Vins, de Villars, and de St. Geran, were here: I embraced them all for you. I shall set out to-morrow morning at five o'clock, and shall write to you from every place through which I pass. I embrace you with all my heart; I am sorry this expression is so much prostituted, for it would

otherwise be an admirable one to explain my manner of loving you.

LETTER CCCCXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Montargis, Tuesday, May 12, 1676.

I WROTE to you last night, my dear child, so that you will receive two of my letters by the same post, and if, after reading the first, you should chance to say, I wish I had another, there it will be for you; and will inform you that I am at Montargis with the good d'Escars, in perfect health, excepting hands and knees.

You know the road hither; I avoided Fontainbleau, for I am determined not to see it till I go to meet you there. I slept at Coutance, where I should have taken a fine walk, if I had not, from timidity, resembled a wet pullet. I may say wet, in the strictest sense of the word, for I perspire all day long; I still continue to wear my hare-skins, for the refreshing coolness of the morning that gives life to every other creature, appears to me like the frosts of December; so that I had rather be too hot for ten hours together, than too cold for half an hour. What think you of these pretty relics of the rheumatism? Do not you think I stand in need of the warm bath? At length, here I am upon the road, and upon your road too. Madame d'Escars and I talk of you incessantly. They say, that to take the waters, a person ought to be *spensierata* (happy in mind), and it is very difficult for me to be so, away from our good abbé, of whose health I am in continual apprehension. Do you know too, how I have left him? with only a single servant. He insisted upon my having his coachman and Beaulieu, with two of his horses to make my

set complete. I see no way of getting out of his debt, but by downright ingratitude.

Adieu, my dear. Alas! what avails it that I am drawing nearer to you? I pity you that you have not me at Paris, to send you some news of Brinvilliers *.

LETTER CCCCXV.

TO THE SAME.

Nevers, Friday, May 15, 1676.

I AM at a place which would tempt me to write to you whether I would or no; you may judge then how it is, knowing my disposition. The weather is delightful; this violent heat has passed off without a storm, I have no more of those crises I told you of; the country is very fine, and I find our river Loire as beautiful here as at Orleans: it is a great pleasure to meet with an old acquaintance upon the road. I have brought my large coach with me, so that we are quite at our ease, and enjoy the fine prospects which rise upon us every instant; all that vexes me is, that the roads will be bad in the winter, which will fatigue you in your journey.

We follow close upon the heels of madame de Montespan, and hear at every place, how she looked, how she ate, how she drank, and how she slept. She is in a calash with eight horses, and has the little Thianges with her; another coach follows with the same num-

* She was condemned on the 16th of June, to have her head cut off, her body burned, and her ashes scattered in the air. Sainte Croix, her accomplice and her lover, was dead, having been suffocated by the vapour of a poison he was preparing. The too eager steps she took to recover a casket that was under the seals, excited suspicion, and determined the officers of justice to open it. It was found to be full of poisons, and by this means her crimes were detected.

ber of horses, with six of her women in it: she has two sumpters, six mules, and ten or twelve men on horseback, without reckoning her officers; her whole train consists of about five and forty persons. She always finds her chamber and bed ready; she goes to bed immediately on her arrival, and eats heartily. She was here at the castle, where M. de Nevers came to give orders for her reception, but he did not stay to receive her. She gives away a great deal in charity, and with a very good grace. She receives a courier from the army every day; she is now at Bourbon. The princess of Tarente, who knows all the rest, will inform me, and I shall take care to communicate it to you. Have I told you, that that same favourite of the king of Denmark, who was so romantically enamoured of the princess, her daughter, is in prison, and is to be tried? He had formed a little design, it seems, of dethroning his master and benefactor, and of making himself king. You find this man had no mean way of thinking. M. de Pomponne spoke of him to me the other day, as of a second Cromwell. Let me tell you, my dear child, that I find I shall not be able to live long without paying another visit to your castle, with all its circumstances and dependences; I cherish this pleasing hope, and wish the prospect was a little less distant. Adieu, my dear; I shall certainly write to you from Moulins, where I hope to find the letters you must by this time have sent to Paris. I am in utter ignorance of all kind of news: I have the war very much at heart, which is but a bad companion for the waters; but what is to be done, when we have a friend in the army? At that rate, I should not be able to take them till January. I read, while I am in the coach, a little history of the vizirs, and the intrigues of the seraglio,

which is amusing enough: it is a book that is quite in fashion.

Good-night, my lovely. I salute Grignan, and send a thousand good wishes to La Garde; tell the latter by what ill-luck the wind has blown our guidonage down the stream: you are fortunate in having them both with you.

LETTER CCCCXVI.

TO THE SAME.

From Moulins at the convent of the Visitation, in the room in which my grandmother* died. Sunday, May 17, 1676, after vespers, with two little girls from Valençai at my side.

I ARRIVED here, my dear, last evening, after a pleasant journey of six days. Madame Fouquet, with her brother-in-law and his son, came to meet me, and took me to their house to sleep. I dined here to-day, and to-morrow I set out for Vichi. I think the mausoleum very beautiful †. The good abbé would have been delighted with it. The little girls are very amiable and pretty; you have seen them, and they remember hearing you sigh very deeply in this church; I believe I had some part in your sorrow; at least I am sure I sighed very mournfully myself much about the same time. Is it true that madame de Guenegaud said to

* Jeanne François Frémiot, baroness of Chantal, foundress of the order of the Visitation, beatified by a brief of pope Benedict the XIV. and canonised by Clement XIII.

† The superb monument which Marie-Félice des Ursins erected in the church of the Visitation at Moulins, to the memory of her husband Henry duke of Montmorency, who was beheaded at Toulouse the 30th of October 1632, by an order of the parliament of Toulouse.

you, "Sigh, madam, sigh; I have accustomed Moulins to the sighs that are brought from Paris?" I admire you greatly for having thought of a match for your brother; you have hit the right nail on the head, and I have a great esteem for the negotiator. I shall follow this clue on my return to Paris, and you may therefore write to d'Hacqueville about it. They judge very well of my son by my daughter; and it would be an event worthy of you to complete this marriage. I shall let no stone remain unturned on my side. And so, you think, my dear child, you were not sufficiently alarmed at my illness. What more, in the name of God, could you have done? you were in much greater alarm than I was in danger: as my two-and-twenty days' fever was only occasioned by pain, it gave no one apprehensions for my safety. My delirium proceeded only from want of proper nourishment, for I could swallow nothing but a little broth; besides, some people are delirious all the time of a fever. Your brother has remembered the nonsense I used to talk, and makes me ready to die with laughing at the repetition; he will tell it you when he sees you, and you will laugh as heartily as I did. Let your mind, therefore, be at rest, my dear child, for you have had but too much uneasiness already on my account.

M. de la Garde must certainly have had very substantial reasons to induce him to harness himself with another: I thought him quite free, bounding and gambolling in a meadow, and I find he has put his neck into the yoke as well as others.

Madame de Montespan is at Bourbon, where M. de la Valliere had given orders for her to be addressed by a deputation from all the towns in his government, but she declined the compliment. She has given twelve beds to the hospital, a great deal of money in charity,

and receives visitors with politeness. M. Fouquet and his niece, who were drinking the waters at Bourbon, went to pay her a visit, and she conversed for nearly an hour with him upon some very curious subjects. Madame Fouquet went the next day; she was received with sweetness and affability, and madame de Montespan listened to her, apparently, with great interest and compassion. God inspired madame Fouquet with eloquence upon the occasion, both upon the subject of sharing her husband's confinement, and the hope that, if ever an opportunity offered, madame de Montespan would remember her misfortunes. In short, without exacting any absolute promise, she set forth the horrors of her situation, and the confidence she had in her goodness, in terms that were calculated to affect the heart, without meanness or importunity; the bare recital affected me, and I am sure it would have affected you.

M. de Montespan's son * is now at madame Fouquet's in the country. He is about ten years old, is handsome and sprightly; his father, at his return to Paris, left him with the Fouquets. The good d'Escars is well, and is extremely kind and careful of me. Pray relate to me the sorceries of madame de Rus.

Adieu, my dear; I embrace you a thousand times, and love you as I love my salvation.

* Louis Anthony de Pardaillan, afterwards duke of Antin.

LETTER CCCCXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Vichi, Tuesday, May 19, 1676.

I BEGIN to write to you to-day: my letter may go when it can, but I am resolved to have a little chat with you.

I arrived here last evening: madame de Brissac with her canoness *, madame de St. Herem, and two or three others, came to receive me on the banks of the pretty river Allier: I think if search were made, some of the Arcadian family might be found on its banks. M. de St. Herem, M. de la Fayette, the abbé Dorat, Planci, and some others, followed in another carriage, and on horseback. I was received with great joy. Madame de Brissac took me home to sup with her; and I think I can already see that the canoness has the good duchess just there—you see where I put my hand. I have rested myself to-day, and to-morrow I begin to drink the waters.

M. de St. Herem came this morning to take me to mass, and from thence to dinner with him; madame de Brissac was of the party, and they played at cards; this is at present too fatiguing an amusement for me. We took a walk this evening in one of the most charming spots in the world, and at seven o'clock the poor *wet pullet* ate her chicken, and chatted a little with her dear child: the more I see of others, the more I love you. I have thought a great deal of the sketch of devotion you drew with M. de la Vergne, and have myself fancied the remainder of this fabulous conversation;

* Madame de Longueval.

what you told me of it, the other day, ought to be printed. I am pleased the *worthy* is not with us; he would have made but an indifferent figure: without drinking the waters, this place is very dull; there is a confusion here that is far from being agreeable, and less so to him than to any other person.

It is reported here, that we have taken Bouchain as happily as Condé, and that, notwithstanding the feints of the prince of Orange, he will certainly attempt nothing; that is some comfort to me*. The good St. Geran has sent me her compliments from La Palisse. I have entreated them all not to mention a word to me about the short distance it is from hence to Lyons; that is a grief to me; and as I do not wish to put my virtue to the greatest and most dangerous trial it can sustain, I will not cherish a thought of this kind, whatever it may cost my heart to banish it.

I wait for your letters here with great impatience, and when I am absent from you, my dear, writing to you is my only pleasure; and should even the physicians, at whom, by the by, I laugh in my sleeve, forbid me this, I should in my turn forbid them to eat or drink, or breathe, to see how they would relish that regimen.

Let me hear some news about my little girl, and if she is reconciled to her convent yet; let me know likewise, if M. de la Garde returns to Paris this winter: I must own, that if, by some unforeseen accident, I should be deprived of the pleasure of seeing you, it would make me half mad. The word *plague*, that I see in

* It was considered as a great fault, that the French did not give battle. Louvois prevented it, and his enemies said he wished to prolong the war. The fact is, that the pride of Lewis XIV. would not allow him to hazard uncertain success. This was not the case, since the prince of Orange himself wished to give battle, and was only restrained by the Spaniards.

your letter, makes me tremble. I should be very apprehensive of a disorder of that kind in such a climate as Provence. I pray God to avert such a scourge from a place where he has fixed you. What misery it is that we should be doomed to pass our days at such a distance from each other, when our affection draws us together so closely!

Wednesday, 20th.

Well, I have taken the waters this morning, my dear; ah, they are horridly disagreeable! I called on the canoness; she does not lodge with madame de Brissac. The company go at six o'clock to the spring; there we all assemble, and drink, and make wry faces; for only figure to yourself that they are boiling-hot, and have a very nauseous taste of sulphur. We walk to and fro, we chat, we go to mass, we work off the waters, and every one speaks, without hesitation, of the effect they produce: thus the time passes till noon: we then go to dinner, and, after dinner, pay visits. This has been my day to see company. Madame de Brissac played at ombre with St. Herem and Planci: the canoness and myself read Ariosto; she is very fond of Italian, and likes me exceedingly. Two or three young ladies of the neighbourhood came with a flute, and danced a bourée very prettily: but to finish my account; at five o'clock, we take a walk in a delightful country; at seven, we eat a light supper, and at ten, retire to rest. So now you know as much of the matter as myself.

I find the waters agree very well with me. I drank a dozen glasses; they purge me a little, which is all that is required of them. I shall bathe in a few days. I shall write to you every evening; this is a consolation to me; and my letters will go when it pleases a certain

little post-boy to call for them, who brings the letters and sets out a quarter of an hour afterwards. Mine shall be always ready for him.

The abbé Bayard is just come from his pretty house to pay me a visit. He is the *Druid Adamas* of this country.

Thursday, 21st.

Our little post-boy is just arrived, covered with mud, but has brought me no letters from you. I have one from Coulanges, one from honest d'Hacqueville, and one from the princess of Tarente, who is at Bourbon. They have allowed her only to make her court for a quarter of an hour; her affairs will go on swimmingly; she wishes for me at Paris, but I think myself very well where I am.

The waters have done me a great deal of good to-day. I fear nothing but the bath. Madame de Brissac had the colic to-day; she lay in bed, looked very handsome, and was dressed in a manner fit to make conquests. Oh, I wish you had but seen how prettily she managed her pains, and her eyes, and her arms, and her cries, with her hands lying on the quilt; and the sympathy she expected from all the by-standers. I was so taken up with this scene, and thought it so excellent, that the stupid posture I stood in, did me, I believe, no little credit with her; for it seemed as if I was petrified with sorrow for her sufferings; and only think that this fine scene was played off purposely for the abbé Bayard, St. Herem, Monjeu, and Planci! In truth, child, when I think of the simplicity of your conduct in your illness, I look upon you as a downright ignoramus; the calmness that sits upon your sweet face! In short, what a difference! I cannot but smile at the comparison.

As to myself, I eat my soup with my left hand by way of novelty. I hear of the good fortune of Bouchain, and that the king is to return soon; I suppose that his majesty will not come alone. You asked me the other day respecting M. Courtin; he is set out for England, and I suppose his companion has now nothing more to do than to adore his fair one, you know who, without envy and without a rival.

LETTER CCCCXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Vichi, Sunday, May 24, 1676.

I AM really enchanted when I receive your letters; they are so delightfully entertaining, that I cannot bear the thoughts of enjoying the pleasure of reading them alone; but be not alarmed, I shall commit no folly: I show Bayard one line, and the canoness another; ah, the canoness would suit you to a tittle! Let me assure you, that every one is delighted with your style. I only show just as much as is proper, and you may be sure I keep the letters too much in my own power, to suffer any one to read what I do not wish to have seen, by peeping over my shoulders. I have written to you several times, both upon the road and from hence. You will have seen all I say, all I do, and all I think, and even the conformity of our opinions relative to the marriage of M. de la Garde. I cannot but admire how much our understanding is the dupe of our hearts, and the plausible reasons we find to defend a change of sentiments. The coadjutor's, I think, is admirable, but the way in which you tell it is still more so: I have always a strong inclination to laugh, when you write me any thing about the honest du Parc; nothing, I con-

ceive, can be more diverting, than to see him persuading himself that he alone can work miracles, though, as you say, the greatest miracle would be, to persuade you of the truth of it.

I am very glad that my dear little girl is content and happy, I was afraid her little heart would break. It is certain that the journey from hence to Grignan is a mere nothing; but then you cannot persuade me, my dear, that from Grignan to Lyons is such a trifle; it is a very fatiguing journey, and I should be very sorry that you attempted it, to go back again directly. I am stedfast in my opinion, you see. If you were one of those who are easily persuaded, and carried away here and there as others pleased, why, I might have had some hopes of bringing you along with me; but you are of a very different stamp; I am convinced I have no complaisance of that kind to expect from you, and therefore rest satisfied that you should keep your love and your money to bring you up next winter, and give me the happiness and consolation of embracing you. If, indeed, I were to fall ill here, which by the way there is not the least danger of, I should certainly write for you to come to me with all possible expedition; but at present I am very well. I drink like a fish every morning; I am a little like Nouveau indeed, who used to ask, "Am I not very happy?" So I ask, Do not the waters work off well? Are they not right in quantity and quality? Is not every thing as it should be? I am told that I do wonders, and I believe it, because I feel it; for excepting my hands and knees, which are not quite as they should be, because I have never been pumped on or bathed yet, I am as well as could possibly be expected.

Our walks are delightful beyond description. and are alone sufficient to restore me to my health. We are

all day long together. Madame de Brissac and the canoness dine here very familiarly, and as every one eats plainly, there is no show of an entertainment at any of our tables. After that admirable farce of the colic, we had a recovery-piece exhibited with all its concomitant languishings, short breathings, &c. which was really worthy of the stage; but it would take up a whole volume to describe all that I have found out in this master-piece of the gods. I pass slightly over a number of things, that I may not write too much. You make me laugh with your account of the saint who is fallen from the skies upon you at Aix, and who stands in so much need of bodily purification: he must certainly have his relicts at his finger-ends: those *living relicts*, as you call his vermin, shocked me; for, as I used always to be called at St. Mary's *, the living relict, I fancied myself in M. Ribon's situation.

I am perfectly overwhelmed with presents by the good people here; this, it seems, is the custom of the country, where we may live almost for nothing: two fowls for three sols, and every thing else in proportion. There are three good men here, whose whole study is to oblige me; these are Bayard, St. Herem, and La Fayette; as I frequently make you pay my debts, I desire you will remember to say a word or two of them in your next.

Adieu, my angel, continue to love me dearly, and be assured that you do not love one who is ungrateful.

* Madame de Sévigné was called by this name among the sisters of the Visitation, on account of her grand-mother, the baroness of Chantal, who founded that convent, and whom they considered as a saint.

LETTER * CCCCXIX.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Vichi, May, 25, 1676.

When I heard of your permission to go to Paris, I felt the most lively emotions, and I ran with Corbinelli to rejoice with madame de Bussy upon the event. But she was removed: I expected every moment that you would come, and that I should see you enter my apartment: but you came not, and I set out for this place to recover my health, the loss of which has afflicted both you and me. You do well to congratulate me on your recall, for I think I shall be much more glad to see you again, than you would be to see me. In this hope I shall swallow two doses of water at a time, in order to expedite my return to Paris, where I already embrace you in anticipation. I entreat my niece de Coligny to believe that I love and esteem her. I dare not write, for it is almost death to me, and I must therefore conclude, that you may not lose a cousin who is very much attached to you.

LETTER CCCCXX.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

Vichi, Tuesday, May 28, 1676.

I ought to receive more of your letters from Paris; they will be heartily welcome, my dear child, whenever they please to arrive; you have not a just idea of the state of my health: do you not know that I have preserved my legs, and that I can walk very well? I have still a few slight pains in my arms, knees, and

shoulders, but the pump will remove them all. I look well, eat well, and sleep well, and am so free from humours, that I shall continue the waters only a fortnight longer, for fear of overheating my blood. To-morrow I begin the pump, and you may depend upon hearing regularly from me. Do not scold me for writing, it is the only pleasure I have, and I manage my time so as not to suffer from it. Do not deprive me of a syllable respecting yourself: you say such kind things to me, so affectionate, so good, and so true, that I can only answer them by what I feel. I do not repent that I did not let you come here, though my heart suffers by it; for when I reflect upon your taking all that trouble to be only a week or ten days with me, I think I shall be much better pleased to see you next winter. I am so attached to you that I feel the pangs of separation more keenly than any other person; and I have therefore been governed by my weakness, without listening to my strong desire of seeing you, and my happiness in having that desire gratified.

I do not intend to remain here more than a week longer. The duchess will go before that time, and the pretty canoness; she goes to Bayard's because I am to be there: he would be as well pleased to be without her: there will be a little troop of *infelici amanti* (unhappy lovers). You lose too much the power of making conquests, my dear child; this is a circumstance you cannot but regret; you should see the havoc that is made here, without distinction, and without appeal. I beheld, with my own eyes, a poor Celestin burnt to tinder the other day; judge how strongly this reminded me of you. There are some very pretty women here: yesterday they danced some of their country bourrées, which are really extremely graceful: they are very quick, and are not deficient in *degognades:* if these

dances were introduced at Versailles in masquerades, their novelty would please, for they are very superior to the Bohemian dances. There was a great boy disguised as a woman, who diverted me extremely: his petticoat was continually in the air, and he displayed a pair of handsome legs underneath it.

I have made myself of consequence here by the news of our sea-fight †. As we wept for the chevalier de Tambonneau, the last time he was killed, there is no occasion to do it now, I think.

Adieu, my dearest child; repose yourself in your charming castle, where I should rejoice to be this summer; but do not speak of it to me. I never knew what it was to have virtue but on this occasion.

LETTER * CCCCXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Vichi, Thursday, May 28, 1676.

I HAVE just received two letters from you; one comes from Paris, and the other from Lyons. You are deprived of a great pleasure in never having your own letters to read: I know not where you obtain all you say, but you write with a grace and propriety that I meet with no where else. You judge well in believing that I write without effort, and that my hands are better: they will not yet close, and the palms and fingers are very much swelled. This makes me tremble, and

† This was the second engagement between Ruyter and Duquêne. It took place on the 22d March, to the north-east of mount Gibel or Etna: the event of the battle was doubtful; but Holland sustained an irreparable loss. Ruyter was mortally wounded. Lewis XIV. gained himself great honour by publicly regretting the loss of his illustrious enemy.

gives a very ill grace to my hands and arms; but one circumstance that consoles me a little is, that I hold my pen without difficulty. I began the operation of the pump to-day; it is no bad rehearsal of purgatory. The patient is naked in a little subterraneous apartment, where there is a tube of hot water, which a woman directs wherever you choose. This state of nature, in which you have scarcely a fig-leaf of clothing, is very humiliating. I wished my two women to be with me, that I might see some one I knew. Behind a curtain a person is stationed to support your courage for half an hour; a physician of Gannet fell to my lot, whom madame de Noailles always takes with her, whom she likes extremely, a very genteel young man neither a quack nor a bigot, and whom she sent me from pure friendship. I shall retain him, though it should cost me my hat; the physicians here are unbearable, and this man amuses me. He is not a low mean wretch, neither is he an Amonis; he has wit and honesty, and he knows the world: in short I am perfectly satisfied. He talked to me the whole time I was under execution: think of a spout of boiling water pouring upon one or other of your poor limbs! It is at first applied to every part of the body, in order to rouse the animal spirits, and then to the joints affected; but when it comes to the nape of the neck, the heat creates a surprise which it is impossible to describe. This, however, is the main point. It is necessary to suffer, and we do suffer; we are not quite scalded to death, and are then put into a warm bed where we sweat profusely, and this is the cure. My physician is still very kind to me; for instead of leaving me for two hours to the tediousness inseparable from such a situation, I make him read to me, and that amuses me. This is the life I shall lead for seven or eight days, during which I expected to drink

the waters also; but this, I am told, would be too much; my stay, therefore, will be rather longer than I expected. It was to bid adieu to my rheumatism, by making the last lather for it, that I was sent here. I find it was necessary. It is like taking a new lease of life and health, and if I could see and embrace you once more in the tenderness and joy of my heart, you might perhaps still call me your *bellissima madre* (most beautiful mother), and I should not renounce the title of *mère-beauté* (mother-beauty), with which M. de Coulanges has honoured me. In short, my child, it depends on you to restore me to all my dignities.

I have felt the twenty-fourth * of this month very painfully; and have marked it by too tender recollections: such days are not easily forgotten: but it would be still more cruel not to see me again, and to refuse me the satisfaction of being with you, merely to prevent me from having the grief of bidding you adieu. I conjure you, my child, to reason differently, and to suffer d'Hacqueville and me to manage the time of your absence, so that you may be at Grignan a sufficient time, and yet have enough to come here. What obligation shall I not owe you, if you think of making up to me next summer for what you have refused me in this! It is true that seeing you for only a fortnight appeared to me an afflicting circumstance for us both; and I thought it wiser to let you keep all your strength for this winter, since it is certain that, the extra expenses of Provence being now at an end, you would not incur greater at Paris: but I have in no way relinquished the hope of seeing you, for I own that I feel it necessary for the preservation of my health and my life. You say nothing of the *pigeon:* is he still timid? Did you not understand what

* The 24th day of May 1675, was the day on which she parted from madame de Grignan at Fontainbleau.

I told you upon that subject? Mine was not at Bouchain; he was a spectator of the two armies ranged so long in order of battle. This is the second time that only the trifling circumstance of fighting was wanting; but as two quarrels are equal to a combat, I suppose that twice within musket-shot is equal to a battle. Be this as it may, the hope of seeing the poor baron gay and cheerful, has spared me much uneasiness. It is a great happiness that the prince of Orange was not affected with the pleasure and honour of being vanquished by such a hero as ours. You must have heard how our warriors, friends and enemies, visited *nell' uno, nell' altro campo,* (in both camps), and sent presents to each other.

I am informed that marshal de Rochefort is certainly dead at Nanci, having fallen a victim, not to the sword, but to a fever. Do you not like the idea of the little chimney-sweepers *? we were tired of Cupids. If the mesdames de Buous are with you, pray give my compliments to them, and particularly to the mother: mothers are entitled to this distinction. Madame de Brissac is going soon; she made sad complaints to me the other day of your coldness to her. The good d'Escars and I stay here to complete our cure. Say something for me to tell her: you cannot imagine how attentive she is to me. I have not told you how much you are celebrated here by the good Saint-Herem, Bayard, Brissac, and Longueval. D'Hacqueville sends me word constantly of mademoiselle de Méri's health: they would be very much alarmed if she were to have the fever, but I hope she will escape as she has so often done before. I am ordered to take chicken-broth every

* She alludes to a paper fan which she sent to madame de Grignan by the chevalier de Buous.

day; nothing is more simple, nor more refreshing: I wish you would take some, to prevent your being burnt up at Grignan. You are very facetious upon the handsome physician of Chelles. The story of the two thrusts with a sword to weaken his man, is very well applied. I am still uneasy about the health of our cardinal; he exhausts himself with reading. Good heavens! had he not read every thing that was to be read? I am delighted, my child, when you speak of your affection for me: I assure you, you cannot believe too firmly, that you constitute all the happiness, all the pleasure, and all the sorrow, of my life.

LETTER CCCCXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Vichi, Monday evening, June 1, 1676.

Away with you, my lady countess! to have the assurance to desire me not to write to you! I would have you know, that it is one of the greatest pleasures I can enjoy. A very pretty regimen you are for prescribing me: but I desire you will leave me to indulge this inclination as I please, since I am always so ready to submit to you in every other respect. But in truth, my dear, I take my own time, and the way in which you interest yourself, with regard to my health, is the very thing that would induce me to take the greatest care of it.

Your reflections on the sacrifices we are obliged to make to reason are very just, in our present situations: it is undoubtedly true, that the love of God is the only thing that can render us happy, both in this world and the other; this has often been said before, but you have given a turn to the expression, which has forcibly

struck me. The death of marshal de Rochefort is a noble subject for meditation. For an ambitious man, whose ambition is satisfied, to die at the age of forty, is a deplorable circumstance! When he was dying, he entreated the countess de Guiche to fetch his wife from Nanci, and he left to her the care of comforting her; which I do not conceive can easily be done, considering in how many ways she is a loser *. I send a letter from madame de la Fayette, which will amuse you. Madame de Brissac came hither for a certain disorder, called the colic, but not having found much relief, has left Bayard's to-day, after having dressed, danced, and squandered away, at a furious rate.

The canoness has written to me; I fancy I thawed her ice by my coldness. I know her perfectly well, and the surest way to please her, is never to ask any thing of her. Madame de Brissac and she make the prettiest contrast of fire and water that I ever beheld. I should like to see this same duchess laying about her in your *Place des Précheurs* † without any respect to age or condition; it exceeds every thing that can be imagined. You are an oddity, child: let me tell you, she would live very well where you would starve with hunger.

But a word or two about this charming pump. I have already given you a description of it: I am now at my fourth operation, and am to continue to eight. My perspirations are so profuse, that they wet the mattresses under me; I really think all the liquids I have drank ever since I came into the world must have re-

* Louvois undertook this office: he fell in love with her, and remained so to the end of his life.

† A public place in the town of Aix.

mained in me till now. When I am in bed, there is really no bearing it; my head, my whole body, is in motion; my spirits are all in arms, and my heart beats violently. Here I lie for a whole hour without opening my mouth, while the sweat is coming on, which lasts for two hours at a time; and to prevent my losing all patience, I make my physician read to me: the man pleases me very much, I assure you, and I believe he would also please you. I have put him upon studying Descartes' philosophy, and repeat to him some things I remember to have heard from you. He is a man of good education, and knows the world; he is no quack I can tell you, but unites the gentleman with the physician; in a word, he is very entertaining.

I shall soon be left alone here, but that gives me no concern, provided they do not deprive me of the charming landscape, the river Allier, the thousand little woods, the brooks, the meadows, the sheep, the goats, and the peasant girls, that dance the bourrée upon the green. I consent to bid adieu to the rest, the country alone would cure me. The sweats which weaken every one else, give me fresh strength, which is a sufficient proof that my disorders proceeded from a redundancy of humours. My knees are much better; my hands indeed are still a little refractory, but they too will come round in time. I shall continue to drink the waters till a week after Corpus Christi day, and then I must submit to the mortifying reflection of removing to a greater distance from you. I own it would give me real satisfaction to have you here entirely to myself; but you have inserted a clause respecting every one's returning to their own home again, that makes me shudder: but no more of this subject, my dear child, it is all over. Do all in your power to come and

see me this winter. I must say that I think you ought to wish to do it, and that M. de Grignan ought likewise to wish you to give me that gratification.

I must tell you, that you do the waters of this place injustice in supposing them to be black; no, no, they are not black; hot, indeed, they are. Your Provence gentry would relish this beverage very indifferently; but if you put a leaf or flower into these waters, it comes out as fresh as when first gathered; they are so far from parching the skin, or making it rough, that they render it smoother and softer than before: now reason upon that. Adieu, my dear child; if it was requisite to the drinking of these waters, that I should not love my daughter, I would renounce them instantly.

LETTER CCCCXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Vichi, Thursday, June 4, 1676.

To-day I have finished the use of the pump and the sweating: I believe that in the space of eight days, not less than ten quarts of water have been extracted from my poor body. I am persuaded nothing else could have done me so much good; and I look upon myself now as insured from rheumatisms for the rest of my life. The being pumped upon and the sweating are certainly dreadful for the time; but then there is a certain half hour when we feel dry and refreshed, and take chicken broth, which I cannot rank in the number of innocent pleasures; for it is a state of luxurious enjoyment. My physician kept up my spirits; I amused myself with him by talking of you; he was deserving of it. He left me to-day, but is to return again, for he

is fond of good society, and since the departure of the duchess de Noailles, he has not found himself so well off as at present. To-morrow I am to take a gentle purgative, then to drink the waters for a week, and all is over. My knees are nearly well, but I cannot yet close my hand. There is a madame le Baroir here, who stammers so dreadfully with the palsy, that she is quite an object of pity; but when we see her ugly, old, dressed to the height of the fashion, with a fly-cap upon a half-bald pate, and reflect, that after having been two and twenty years a widow, she fell violently in love with M. de la Baroir, who was paying his addresses publicly to another, that she gave this man every farthing she had in the world, and that he has never slept with her but a quarter of an hour since they have been married, and then merely to legalise the marriage, and secure her property, and afterwards turned her headlong out of the house; (what a long-winded period is this!) when we consider all this, I say, we have a strange inclination to spit in her face.

We hear that madame de Péquigny * is coming hither likewise; she is the Cumæan Sybil. She is seeking a cure for seventy-three, an age that sits somewhat uneasily upon her. This place will become a perfect bedlam soon. Yesterday I myself put a rose into the hot well, where it soaked for a long time, and on taking it out, it was as fresh as when upon the bush: I put another into a saucepan of boiling water, and it was in a jelly, in an instant. This experiment, which I had often heard mentioned, afforded me a good deal of pleasure. The waters are certainly miraculous.

I intend to send you, by a little priest who is going

* Clara Charlotte d'Ailli, mother of Charles d'Albert, duke of Chaulnes.

to Aix, a book which is universally read, and which has amused me highly; it is entitled, The History of the Vizirs, in which you will meet with the wars of Hungary and Candy, and in the person of the grand vizir* whom you have heard so much extolled, and who still reigns, you will find a man so perfect, that I think no Christian can surpass him. God preserve Christianity. You will likewise meet with some accounts of the valour of the king of Poland†, which are not known, and are truly worthy of admiration. I am now impatiently expecting letters from you, and so I gossip in the mean time. Do not be afraid that I shall ever receive any injury from it; there is no danger in writing at night.

Well! my dear lovely child, I have just received your letter of the 10th of May. There are some passages in it which make me laugh till the tears come into my eyes: that, where you say you cannot find a word for madame de la Fayette, is admirable. I think you are so much in the right, that I cannot conceive how I could ask such a needless thing of you; perhaps it was in the transport of my gratitude for the good wine that smelled of the cask: you were always ready to throw her in a *suppose*, and some other word which I do not now recollect. I am charmed that our *pigeon* may some day have the figure of a Grignan; you represent him as very pretty and very amiable: you were causelessly alarmed at his bashfulness; his education will be an amusement to you, and will prove the happiness of his future life: you take the right method to make him a good man. You now see the advantage of

* Achmet Coprogli Pacha, who died in December, 1676.

† John Sobieski.

putting him into breeches; they are mere girls while they continue in petticoats.

You are not yet satisfied about my hands, you say, my dearest child; I can almost do what I will with them now, only that I cannot close them farther than is necessary for holding my pen; for the palms do not seem to have any inclination to *unswell.* What think you of these agreeable relics of a rheumatism? The cardinal (de Retz) wrote me word the other day, that the physicians have given the disorder in his head the title of a rheumatism of the membranes, what a name! I had nearly burst into tears at the bare mention of the word rheumatism.

You seem to be very well off this summer in your château. M. de la Garde is no small addition to your society, and I am persuaded you think so, and take advantage of it. I think I did very wisely in saving you the fatigue of a journey to Vichi, and myself the pain of bidding you adieu again, almost as soon as you arrived. But I flatter myself with the hopes of going to Grignan another year; I wish to see you in your château with all the Grignans there are in the world; there can never be too many. I have a tender remembrance of my last visit, which bids fair for a second journey as soon as I am able to undertake it. I absolutely laughed, though against my inclination, at the news honest d'Hacqueville sent you of the engagement at sea; it was like sending me news from Rennes, when I was at the Rocks: but pray look out for somebody else to join you in laughing at him; you know the vow I took when he sent me Davenneau's * letter, which restored me to life.

* See the Letter of 23d February.

What say you of marshal de Lorges? He is captain of the gardes du corps; the two brothers are become twins *. Mademoiselle de Frémont is really very well married, and M. de Lorges too: I am heartily rejoiced at it for the sake of the chevalier (de Grignan); the more his friend is advanced, the more he will have it in his power to serve him. Madame de Coulanges writes me word that she has heard that madame de Brissac is cured, and keeps the waters of Vichi upon her stomach: so much for our good little friend. You have struck the good abbé all of a heap with talking about not resuming your apartment at Paris: alas! my dear child, I keep it, and delight in it on no other account: in God's name, do not think of taking up your abode any where but under my roof. I perfectly adore the abbé for what he has written to me on that subject, and for the desire he shows of my receiving so dear and agreeable a companion there. Adieu, my dear; I embrace you a thousand and a thousand times, with a tenderness that ought to please you, if you really love me. Present my best compliments to M. de la Garde, and to M. de Grignan; particularly to the first on his nuptials. Kiss the *pigeons* for me; I am delighted at the sprightliness of Paulina, but will the *little little one* † absolutely live in spite of the opinion of Hippocrates and Galen? I dare say he will prove a very extraordinary man. The inhumanity you give your children is one of the most convenient things in the world. Thank God there is one ‡ who no longer thinks of either father or mo-

* Marshal de Duras and marshal de Lorges were both captains in the gardes du corps at the same time.

† The child of which madame de Grignan was delivered at the eighth month. See the Letter of 23d February.

‡ Mary Blanch, of whom mention is made in the Letter of 6th May.

ther; ah! my dear, she never learnt that happy quality from you; you love me but too well, and I always find your thoughts occupied with me, and my health. I am afraid you have suffered too much on my account.

LETTER CCCCXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Vichi, Monday, June 8, 1676.

Doubt not, my child, but that it affects me painfully to be obliged to prefer any thing to you who are so dear to me; all my consolation is, that you are not ignorant of my sentiments, and will find in my conduct an excellent subject, for reflecting, as you did the other day, on the preference to be given to duty over inclination. But I conjure you and M. de Grignan likewise, to have the goodness to comfort me this winter, for a sacrifice which has cost me so dear. If this is what is called virtue and gratitude, I no longer wonder that we find so little promptitude in exercising these noble virtues. I dare not, however, dwell long on these thoughts, they interrupt the calmness of mind enjoined to those who repair hither. Let me also entreat you to consider yourself engaged to me as usual, and be assured that it is precisely what I most ardently wish for.

You are uneasy, you say, about my being pumped upon: I have borne it now for eight mornings successively; it made me sweat profusely, which is what was wished; and has been so far from weakening me, that I find myself the stronger for it. It is certain that your presence would have been a great comfort to me, but I doubt whether I should have suffered you to have staid amidst all this smoke and vapour: my sweating,

I fancy, would have a little excited your pity; but, upon the whole, I assure you, I am the admiration of the place, for having so courageously supported the operation. My knees are perfectly cured, and could I but close my hands, there would be no remains of my disorder left. I shall continue to drink the waters till Saturday, which will be my sixteenth day: they purge me, and do me a great deal of good. I am vexed that you cannot see the bourrées of this country; it is the most surprising sight imaginable; the peasantry dance in as true time as you do, and with such an activity, a sprightliness, that, in short, I am quite in raptures with them. I have a little band of music every evening, which costs me a mere trifle, and it is perfectly enchanting to see the remains of the shepherds and shepherdesses of Lignon * dancing in these delightful meadows. It is impossible for me not to wish you here, with all your wisdom, a spectatress of these pleasing follies. We have the Cumæan Sybil † here still, so bedecked, and so gay! she thinks, poor soul, she is cured; which makes me pity her. I know not what might happen indeed, if this was the fountain of youth.

What you say of Death taking the liberty of interrupting Fortune is admirable; this ought to comfort those who are not in the number of her favourites, and to diminish the bitterness of death. You ask me if I am religious: alas! my dear, I am not sufficiently so, for which I am very sorry; but yet I think I am somewhat detached from what is called the world. Age and sickness give us leisure enough for serious reflection;

* A small river, but rendered famous by the romance of Astræa.

† Madame de Pequigny. See the preceding Letter.

but what I retrench from the rest of the world I bestow upon you, so that I make but small advances in the path of detachment; and you know that the law of the game is to begin by effacing a little, what is dearest to our heart.

Madame de Montespan set out last Thursday from Moulins in a boat delightfully painted and gilded, and furnished with crimson damask; this magnificent little vessel had been provided for her by the intendant (M. Morant), and was ornamented with an infinite number of devices, and the colours of France and Navarre; nothing was ever more gallant; it could not have cost him less than a thousand crowns; but he was amply repaid by a letter which the fair one wrote to his majesty on the occasion, which it is said she filled with nothing but encomiums upon its magnificence. She would not be seen by the women, but the men got a sight of her under the shadow of the intendant's countenance. She is gone down the Allier to meet the Loire at Nevers, which is to have the honour of conveying her to Tours, and from thence to Fontevrauld *, where she waits for the king's return, who is taken up at present with his warlike occupations. I fancy this preference is not very pleasing.

I shall easily comfort myself for de Ruyter's death, on account of its rendering your intended voyage more safe: is it not true, my dear count? You desire me to love you both; alas! what else do I do? Pray be easy on that score.

I have told you what our little Coulanges says respecting the cure of the duchess (de Brissac), which consists in retaining the waters of Vichi: this is pleasant

* Fontevrauld is but one league from the river Loire.

enough. You find I knew all about *Guenani* * at the time you mentioned it to me.

I have just taken my waters, and they are half gone off again; this is Tuesday, at ten o'clock in the forenoon. As I am certain I cannot please you better than by laying down my pen, I conclude with embracing you tenderly.

LETTER CCCCXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Vichi, Thursday evening, June 11, 1676.

You should be welcome, my dear, to come and tell me in person that I must not write to you at five o'clock in the evening: but it is the only pleasure I have; it is the only thing that keeps me awake. If I had an inclination to take a little nap, I should only have to take the cards in my hand, for nothing so effectually puts me to sleep. If I want to keep awake, which by the bye is what I am ordered to do, I must think of you, write to you, and chat with you, about the news of Vichi: this is the true and only method of preventing all sorts of dozing or laziness in me.

This morning when I was at the well, I saw an honest capuchin, who made me a very low bow, which I returned with equal respect on my side, for I greatly honour his dress. He began to talk to me of Provence, of you, and of M. Roquesante, and of having seen me

* The natural daughter of Henry Julius de Bourbon, duke of Anguien, and of Frances de Montalais, relict of Jean de Beüil, count of Marans. She was declared legitimate in June, 1692, and 5th March, 1696, she married Armand de l'Espars de Madaillan marquis de Lassai, whose third wife she was. The name of Guenani here is the anagram of *Anguien*.

at Aix, and of the grief you had been under on account of my indisposition. I wish you had seen how much I made of the good father, the instant I found him so well informed. I do not suppose that you have ever seen or remarked him; but he mentioned your name, and that was enough for me. The physician whom I still retain for the sake of his society, could not help wondering to see me fix myself upon the good father. I assured him that if he were in Provence, and should tell you that he had been with me at Vichi, he would not meet with a worse reception on that account; he seemed to me impatient to go there, that he might tell you something of my health, which, my hands excepted, is now quite established, and I am persuaded you would not be sorry to embrace me in my present situation, especially as you know how I have been before. We shall see, however, whether you can still continue to dispense with the presence of those you love; or whether you will give them the pleasure of seeing you, where d'Hacqueville and I expect you.

La Péquigny is returned unexpectedly to the spring; oh, she is a strange machine! she will do every thing that I do, that she may be as well as I am. Her physicians tell her she will be so, and mine laughs at her. But notwithstanding all her follies and weaknesses, she does not want wit, and has said five or six very good things. She is the only person whom I have ever seen practise the virtue of liberality without restraint or limitation. She has 2500 louis, which she is determined to leave behind her in this place. She treats, she raffles, she dresses, she maintains the poor: ask her for a pistole, and she gives two. Things, that I have hitherto only supposed, I find realised in her. Indeed she has 25,000 crowns a year, and when at Paris she only spends 10,000. Here is some foundation for all

this magnificence; but I think her very praise-worthy for adding the will to the power, two things which are almost always separated.

The good d'Escars has reminded me of what I said to the duchess (de Brissac), the day the Celestin friar was so smitten, at which she laughed immoderately; and as you generally expect some sincerity from me on these occasions, I will tell you what I said to her. "Really, madam," said I, "you take good aim at the father, you are determined not to miss him." She pretended not to understand me; upon which I told her I had seen the poor Celestin in flames: she knew it very well, but never checked herself in the pleasure of committing murders.

Friday noon.

I am just come from the well, that is to say, at nine o'clock, and the waters have performed their duty: you must not therefore be angry, my love, if I write a short answer to your letter: in God's name rely upon my care of myself, and laugh, laugh upon my report; I laugh myself whenever I can: I am a little troubled indeed with a desire to go to Grignan, where I assuredly shall not go. You have given me a plan for this summer and autumn, that would please and suit me extremely: I should then be at M. de la Garde's wedding; I should fill my place very well, and would help you to be revenged for the Loire affair: I would sing: "The wisest falls in love, and is caught he knows not how." In short, Grignan and all its inhabitants hang strangely about my heart. I assure you I perform an heroic, a very heroic action, in removing thus far from you. How I love you for remembering, so opportunely, our Moral Essays! I both prize and admire them. It is certain, that M. de la Garde's *myself* is going to be multiplied;

so much the better, every thing of his must be good. He still suits my taste as much as at Paris. I have not had the curiosity to ask any question about the lady *. Do you remember what I told Corbinelli one day, that a certain man was going to marry? "Is this all you know about it?" said he. I am, however, indifferent about it, persuaded that if I had ever heard her name, you would have told me further particulars.

I return to the subject of my health, which is now perfectly restored; the waters and the pumping have evacuated a great quantity of humours. I walk now like another person; I am afraid of growing too fat again, that is all my uneasiness, for I should like to remain just as I am. My hands are still a little stiff, but the warm weather will bring them about. They want to send me to Mont d'Or, but I will not go. I now eat any thing, that is to say, I might, if I were not taking the waters. I have experienced greater benefit at Vichi than any one else has done, for there are many who can say of these baths,

> Ce bain si chaud, tant de fois eprouvé,
> M'a laissé comme il m'a trouvé †.

For my part I should fib if I were to say so, for there is so little difference in my hands and other people's, that it is hardly worth mentioning. Pass your summer then happily, my dear: I wish I could send you two dancing girls, and two lads who play on the tabor and pipe here, for the wedding, that you might see their

* The marriage in question did not take place, notwithstanding things were in such forwardness. M. de la Garde was the son of Lewis d'Esealin des Aimers, baron de la Garde, and of Joan Adhemar de Monteil, aunt of M. de Grignan.

† Though soak'd in water to the chin,
I came out—just as I went in.

manner of dancing a *bourrée:* the Bohemians are inelegant and tasteless compared to them. I delight in gracefulness. Do you remember how red you once made my eyes look, at seeing you dance remarkably well? I assure you, that you would receive no small pleasure, from seeing this dance performed as it is here. I must think of my letter for M. de la Garde. Tomorrow I set out from hence: I shall go and rest myself a while at Bayard's, and then remove to a still greater distance from the object of my tenderest love, till it shall please you to take the necessary steps for restoring joy to my heart, and health to my body, as you know the one is nearly concerned in whatever affects the other.

LETTER CCCCXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

From the abbé Bayard's, at Langlar,
Monday, June 15, 1676.

I ARRIVED here on Saturday last, my dear, as I informed you I should. I took medicine yesterday, in order to acquit myself of all the ceremonials of Vichi; I am in perfect health; the warm weather will completely restore my hands; I make the yoke they have laid on me, as light and easy as possible: I begin to walk later, to resume my usual hour of going to bed, and am no longer the poor timid creature that I was. However, I manage my little skiff with prudence; and if I should steer wrong, it is only to cry out *rheumatism* to me, and I instantly return to my proper course. Would to God, my dear, that by the effect of some art, black or white, you could be transported hither for a while; you would be perfectly delighted with the virtues and

hospitality of the master of the house, and would admire his courage and perseverance in converting a hideous desolate mountain into the most beautiful and delicious spot imaginable. I am sure it is a novelty that could not fail of striking you. If this mountain were at Versailles, I do not doubt, but there are some who would prize it above all the forced beauties that are there extorted from poor oppressed Nature, in the short and transitory effects of numerous fountains. The pipe and tabor call forth the fauns to dance the *bourrée* of Auvergne in woods replete with odours, which remind me of yours in Provence; in short, we talk of you here, we drink your health, and here I rest my wearied limbs in ease and tranquillity. On Wednesday I shall be at Moulins, where I shall find a letter from you, without offence to the one I expect after dinner. The people in this neighbourhood are more reasonable, and well bred, than any I have met with in the other provinces; for they have seen the world, and have not forgotten it. The abbé Bayard appears to me to be happy, both in being and thinking himself so. But I, my dear countess, cannot be happy without you: my heart is always agitated with hopes and fears, and with the dreadful apprehension of seeing my days pass away at a distance from you. Time runs and flies swiftly, and I know not how or when I shall overtake you: But I will chase these gloomy reflections, by calling to mind a remark that was made to me in Britany of the avarice of a certain priest: "Madam," said the person to me, very innocently, "he is a man who eats the small fish all his life, that he may eat the large fish after he is dead." I thought this a pleasant stroke, and I apply it to myself in my present situation. Certain ties and considerations oblige me to feed upon small fish all my

life, in the hope of having the large fish when I am dead.

The swelling of my hands has now disappeared, and as I was always in hope that heat would have the desired effect on them, it determined me to take the journey to Vichi, where the pumping and sweating have rid me of all future apprehensions of the rheumatism: this is what I aimed at, and which I have been fortunate enough to attain.

I consider myself greatly honoured by the praise M. de Grignan bestows upon my letters; I never think them good; but since you both approve them, I ask no more. I thank you for the hope you give me of seeing you this winter; I never more ardently longed to embrace you. I love the abbé for having written to you in so tender and paternal a style: must not he, who can with difficulty support my being absent from him for only six weeks, enter deeply into the affliction I feel in passing so much of my life without you, and into the extreme desire that I have to be with you?

They say madame de Rochefort is inconsolable. Madame de Vaubrun is still in as deep despair as at first. I will write to you from Moulins; I have not time to answer half your agreeable letter. Adieu.

LETTER CCCCXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

From Moulins, Thursday, June 18, 1676.

SINCE you will have me remove farther from you, and are weary of an answer in four days, alas! I will comply; but this is not to be done without grief, and without reflecting as we have already done, on the laws we are obliged to impose on ourselves, and the martyr-

dom we voluntarily suffer, by giving the preference to duty over inclination; I am a striking example of this. But I must own to you, my beloved child, that my sorrow is somewhat alleviated by the hope I carry with me of seeing you this winter.

Ruyter is dead; let the Dutch regret his loss; to me this event seems the means of giving you more liberty. Coasting voyages are disagreeable; and that which M. de Grignan has to make, is not the most convenient in the world. We will endeavour to let you rest quietly at Grignan till the month of October. It was that you might not break your rest that I was against your coming to me at Vichi, and for certain other reasons that I have already told you.

I left Langlar yesterday. The good princess (of Tarente) sent a servant to me to acquaint me she should be here on Tuesday the 16th. Bayard, with his perfect virtue, could not comprehend the absolute necessity of my setting out: he kept the servant, and assured me so strongly that the princess would wait for me till Wednesday, which was yesterday, and that he himself would accompany me, that I yielded to him. Accordingly, yesterday we came hither, but the princess had set out by day-break, and had left a letter for me full of the lamentations of Jeremiah: she is returned to Vitré without seeing me, which she says truly afflicts her, and adds, that it would have been some comfort to her, to have spoken to me; I was excessively vexed at the incident, and could absolutely have beaten Bayard. We slept at madame Fouquet's, where a very pretty woman, a relation of hers, received us, and did the honours of the house. These poor souls are at Pomé, in a small house they have purchased, where I shall pay them a visit this afternoon. Iam going to dine at St. Mary's with M. de Montmorenci's tomb, and the

little Valençais. From Pomé I shall write you a great many particulars relative to *Quanto*, which will surprise you; what will appear excellent to you is, that they will all be true, and all mysterious. Bayard is of the party; he is a secoud d'Hacqueville for honesty, arbitrations, and sage advice. He is an adorer of yours, and beseeches you to permit him to continue so, on account of the regard he has for me.

If you receive an answer from M. de Lorges to let you know, that people are happy when they are contented, pray let me have a sight of it: in the mean time let me tell you this man has gained by his moderation, what the other will perhaps never acquire with all the assistance of fortune. He is happy because he is contented, and he is contented because he has good sense. What you said the other day of Rochefort was as good as it was just, that in wishing for every thing, he had only forgotten to wish not to die so soon. This was a stroke not to be excelled, but there would be no end of repeating every thing of that kind which comes from you.

You desired to know if it be true, that the duchess of Sault* was really a page: no, she was not absolutely a page; but it is true that she was so tired of remaining in the solitude of Machecoul with her mother, and thinks it so pretty to be the duchess of Sault, that she can scarcely contain her joy, and this is what the Italians call *non puó capire*. She is very happy to be contented, and that diffuses a sort of extravagant joy over all her actions, which is no longer the fashion at

* Paula de Gondi, daughter of Peter and Catharine de Gondi, duchess of Retz, married March 12, 1675, to Francis Emmanuel de Bonne de Créqui, duke of Lesdiguières, and the same who was afterwards called duchess of Lesdiguières.

court, where every one has his griefs, and where a smile has not appeared for several years. Her person would please you, though she is not handsome; for she is very finely formed, and is very graceful in every thing she does.

I am continually in pain for our cardinal, for he conceals all his disorders from me on account of the lively interest I take in his health: but that perpetual headache does not please me. I am very well, and only expect from warmth the free use of my hands, though they serve me as well as if nothing ailed them: I am become used to their little defects, and really begin to think that it is not so very necessary to shut one's hands; of what use is it? It is of no consequence when there is no one whose hand we wish to press. Besides, it is a small relic of the disorder, for which I have so profound a respect, that the very name of it makes me tremble. In short, my angel, give yourself no farther concern about me: all that remains to make me completely happy depends upon you.

LETTER CCCCXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

From Pomé, Saturday, June 20, 1676.

You still upbraid me with my unkindness in not suffering you to come to Vichi: believe me, my dear child, I suffered more in that refusal than yourself, but it did not please Providence to dispose things in such a manner as to allow me that greatest of all pleasures. I was afraid of the inconvenience attendant on such a journey, which is both long and dangerous; and then the heat of the weather was another circumstance. I was afraid

that this journey would prevent another; I was afraid of parting with you; I was afraid of following you; in short, I was afraid of every thing from my own weakness and affection: it was only your absence that could make me give the abbé the preference. I was but too much taken up with the thought of our near vicinity to each other; a thought which has caused me to the full as much trouble as it has to you, and has frequently brought tears into my eyes. Thus much have I to say in justification of myself and of the truth: accept it as such, my child, and convince me of your tenderness in return, by coming to me this winter. But let us change the subject.

I have been here ever since Thursday, as I told you I should be, and to-morrow I go to Moulins, from whence I shall set out on Monday for Nevers and Paris. This is the best place in the world; the house is pleasant, and the chapel handsomely ornamented. If my poor hands should oblige me to take another journey to Vichi, I assure you I will not be guilty of the same cruelty to myself that I was last time. Corbinelli thinks me enlisted into the army of indolence; but I do not know whether the return of my health may not throw me back into my wonted rusticity. If it does, I will let you know, that you may not show me more regard than I deserve.

I commend you highly for the desire you express of seeing the poor baron * settled. When I get to Paris, I will study how to second your good intentions. Do you not think we are very fortunate in having such a quiet campaign? I am sadly afraid of a detachment for Germany. I find you are not in absolute ignorance

* M. de Sévigné, her son.

of De Ruyter's death, nor of poor Penautier's* imprisonment. I shall get to Paris time enough to inform you more particularly about these tragical events. I heartily wish your little river may furnish you with water enough to bathe yourself coolly and commodiously, for they have a strange method of bathing at Vichi.

Moulins, Sunday evening, June 21.

What happiness, my dear child, to receive your letter of the 17th, as soon as I arrived from Pomé, where I left the two saints†! I have brought mademoiselle de Fouquet with me, who does the honours of her mother's house in this place; she is to return to-morrow morning, when I shall set out for Nevers.

You judge extremely well of the *me* in the Moral Essays. It is certain, as old Chapelain observed, that there is a tincture of the ridiculous in that expression: the rest of the work is far too grave for such foppery, but we make a very good use of it. You describe Grignan to me as surprisingly beautiful; well, am I to blame when I assert, that M. de Grignan, with all his mildness, does exactly as he pleases? In vain we cried out, Poverty; the furniture, pictures, chimney-pieces, all went on at the same rate: I do not doubt that every thing is as complete as possible; that is not what we contend for, but where did he find all the money for this? My child, he must certainly study the black art. Let me conjure you not to disappoint me this winter; I can suffer no inconvenience so great as that of being

* Penautier, receiver general of the clergy, the friend of madame de Brinvilliers, was accused of having put her secrets in practice, and it cost him half his property to suppress these accusations.

Siècle de Louis XIV.

† Mesdames Fouquet.

without you: no, in this case, my courage would quite fail me. As to my hands, they are as yet *unshuttable;* but I eat, and I have the use of them enough not to be at a loss for any thing. I have lost my sick looks, and am *bellissima*, which you will hardly believe.

You are continually gaining victories upon your seas: I am persuaded d'Hacqueville will send you back your account, for certainly he can never suffer any one else should be the first to tell him a piece of news. You diverted me highly in what you said of marshal de Vivonne, and the foresight which procured him that dignity. Corbinelli is delighted at his good fortune. The abbé Bayard is still with me here, and stays with me as long as he can. He is greatly struck with your merit. He is a friend, let me tell you, of no small consequence, and kisses your hand a thousand times. Mesdames Fouquet have charged me with their holy compliments for you. Adieu, my beautiful, charming child, I quit you to go and entertain my company. I will write to you upon the road.

LETTER CCCCXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

From Briare, Wednesday, June 24, 1676.

I AM quite uncomfortable, my dear child, at being so long without writing to you. I wrote twice from Moulins; but it is a great way from hence to Moulins. I now begin to date my letters at the distance you wish. Monday next we set out from this good town: we have had very hot weather. I am sure your little river must be almost dried up, since our fine Loire is so in many places. I wonder how madame de Montespan and the princess de Tarente managed; they must certainly have

slid along upon the sand. We set out at four o'clock in the morning, we rest a long time at dinner, we sleep upon straw, and the cushions of our coach, to avoid the inconveniences of the season. I am now become as nobly idle as yourself, through mere excess of heat; and I could keep you company in chatting upon a bed, as long as there was ground for it to stand upon. My head is full of the beauties of your apartments, you have been a long time describing them to me. I fancy that upon that same bed you will explain to me those follies which proceed from defects of the mind, and of which I almost doubt. I am always ready to place, in the first rank of good or bad, what comes from that quarter; the rest I think supportable, and sometimes even excusable; the sentiments of the heart appear to me alone worthy of consideration, and for their sake I forgive every thing; this is a foundation for comfort and reward to us: it is therefore only through an apprehension of a deficiency in this respect that we are pained by many things.

But a word or two more respecting your fine pictures, and the extraordinary death of Raphael Urbin*; this is what I sheuld never have suspected, any more than I did the violent heat we have had: for I have remarked for these ten years that we could bear a fire very well on midsummer day, and trusting to that have been deceived. The physicians term the present refractoriness of my hands, a remain of the rheumatism, which is not easily persuaded: but we have warmth enough now to set us right in this respect. My pores are so opened

* This celebrated painter died at the age of thirty-seven, of an intemperate indulgence with his mistress, which he concealed from his physicians, who, mistaking his case, killed him by venesection. The hope of being made a cardinal induced him to persist in this fatal concealment.

by continual perspiration, that I am perpetually in a bath, and the good d'Escars does not dare propose to me to throw off my clothes, because she says, she knows I am fond of sweating. Indeed I still fancy myself cold when I am not extremely hot, but this will vanish with the *wet pullet,* which is every day taking leave of me. We expect to be at Vaux on Friday, and to spend a divine evening there, but I fear we shall not reach it till Saturday; however, I shall still continue writing to you, which is my only pleasure.

Madame de la Fayette has written me word that Guenani is returned to Maubuisson, and that she is agreeable without being handsome: she is sprightly, genteel, complaisant, vain, and foolish; do you know her again, you who have been one of her most intimate acquaintance? I do not know why you say that story has got air, I never heard it mentioned by any one, and it will prove false, as a thousand other things have done. His majesty's love of war, may possibly produce that effect. Poor plain friendship is much more durable; it is certain that the word *eternal passion* quite frightened a certain beauty of the last age; and as a poor lover was protesting to her, thinking to do wonders, that he would love her all her life, she declared this was the very reason why she would not accept him, for that nothing was so dreadful to her as the thought of being loved long by the same person. You see how opinions differ.

A relation of the abbé Bayard's, who was with us at Langlar, would have been a very worthy object of her admiration if he had lived in her time; she could have met with nothing like him in all her travels; he neither says nor does any thing awkwardly, is young and handsome, dances the *bourrée,* and makes little songs with surprising facility. An ugly woman came to Bayard's,

who is suspected of being a coquet: the little man immediately wrote these lines, which Bayard gave to me:

C*** n'est pas mal-habile,
Quand il s'agit de prendre un cœur;
Si ce n'est celui du pupille,
C'est celui de son gouverneur †.

He has made many others equally sprightly, but you have no taste, I believe, for things of this kind. It is abusing your patience, therefore, to write them; and seems as if I took your affection and leisure for granted. But I have no news to tell you. What you say of the king's foresight with regard to *Quanto's* brother ‡ is an admirable subject for meditation. I meditate also very frequently on the joyful hope I have of seeing you at Paris.

LETTER CCCCXXX.

TO THE SAME.

Nemours, Friday, June 26, 1676.

I DEFY your Provence to be more on fire than this country; we have the misery besides to be without the hope of a cool wind. We travel, as it were, all night, and sweat all day. Yesterday my horses seemed to express a strong desire of resting themselves at Montargis; accordingly we staid there the remainder of the day. We got in about eight in the morning. It is very delightful to see the day break, and to welcome it in with appro-

† C***, though skilful in gaining a heart,
Is unwilling to brook a disaster;
And if the pupil's she cannot secure,
Is contented with that of the master.

‡ M. de Vivonne.

priate sonnets. We spent the evening at madame de Fiennes', who is governess of this town, and of her husband, though he, poor man, is called the governor: she came to fetch me at my inn, and talked of the time when she did you the honour of her approbation; you know her air, and dictatorial manner; she is superbly lodged. This is a very pretty establishment; she reigns here for three or four months, and then goes to lick the dust at the feet of the grandees, as you know. She told me she expected mademoiselle de Fiennes, and that she had heard La Brinvilliers had impeached a number of persons, and named the chevalier de B******, mesdames de G****, and mesdames de Cl****, as having poisoned Madame; that is all †. I believe all this to be false; but it is very unpleasant and vexatious to be obliged to clear one's self of such accusations. This she devil has strongly accused Penautier, who is thrown into prison beforehand; this affair takes up all the attention of Paris, to the prejudice of the news from the army. When I get there, you may depend upon my leaving nothing undone, to give you certain information how things go in this extraordinary affair.

We shall sleep to-night at the castle of Fontainbleau; for I detest the Golden Lion ever since I parted with you there; but I hope to make matters up with it when I go there to meet you. I have been thinking of your journey, and shall give you my advice, which I hope you will follow; we have time enough before us, and will not talk of it now. I am very glad, since the weather proves so hot, that I left you quiet in my closet at

† These initials can designate no other than the chevalier de Beuvron, one of the favourites of Monsieur, madame de Clerembaut, governess of his children, and madame de Grancey, who passed for his mistress. No one of these three persons was seriously suspected of this pretended poison. (See the following Letter.)

Grignan; you would have been dead to have gone back at this season. If St. Herem * is at his house in the castle, and should have learnt any news there, I may write to you again, perhaps this evening; but in my present uncertainty I write to you from hence, lest I should have nothing left but to go to bed when I get there, for it will be very late, and it is your pleasure that I should take care of myself.

LETTER CCCCXXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, July 1, 1676.

I ARRIVED here on Sunday, my dear. I slept at Vaux, intending to refresh myself at the beautiful fountain there, and to sup upon a couple of new-laid eggs; see the difference. The count de Vaux † had heard of my arrival, and provided an excellent supper for me; and all the fountains were silent and without a drop of water, being under repair: this little mistake in my reckoning made me smile. The count de Vaux has merit, and the chevalier (de Grignan) has told me that he does not know a more truly brave man. Praises of this nature do not come from the *petit glorieux* at random. The count and I had a great deal of conversation respecting the present situation of his affairs, and what they had formerly been. I told him, for his comfort, that as favour would no longer have any share in the approbation he would meet with, he might place it wholly to the account of his own merit, which would

* M. de St. Herem was governor of the castle of Fontainbleau.

† The eldest son of M. Fouquet, superintendent of the finances.

render the pleasure infinitely more sensible and pure: I know not whether he liked my rhetoric.

At length we arrived here, where I found at my gate madame de Villars, de St. Geran, and d'Heudicourt, who asked me *when I was expected*, for they were, at that instant, come to inquire. A moment afterwards came M. de Rochefoucault, madame de la Sablière by chance, the Coulanges, Sansei, and d'Hacqueville; so there we were all assembled, while the drops trickled down our cheeks, not tears, but perspiration: the thermometers were never known so high. I have got such a knack of sweating, that I am always in this state, and am obliged to shift myself three or four times a day. The *worthy* was overjoyed to see me returned, and, not knowing how to make enough of me, told me he wished I might soon experience a pleasure equal to his. I have received numerous visits these two days, and have extolled the virtues of the waters of Vichi, and their salutary effects; if ever old de Lorme takes leave of the company, the maréchale d'Estrées † and I have undertaken to ruin Bourbon. Madame de la Fayette is at Chantilli. I gave your letter to Corbinelli, who read it to me; it is an admirable one; indeed, child, you have too much wit when you please to exercise it. Corbinelli is beside himself to find a woman's head formed like yours.

But I return to the foolish piece of news that madame de Fiennes told me at Montargis. There was not the least mention made of mesdames de Cl***, de G***, nor of the chevalier de B*** ‡: nothing could be more

† Gabrielle de Longueval, maréchale d'Estrées.

‡ Not only none of these persons were suspected of this crime, but we are now in possession of reasons which were even unknown to Voltaire, to believe, with him, that the death of Madame was natural. Madame, the second wife of Monsieur, and the duke de Saint Simon

erroneous. Penautier was confined in Ravaillac's dungeon for nine days, where he was almost killed: upon which they removed him; his affair is a very disagreeable one. He has powerful protectors; the archbishop of Paris *, and M. Colbert, support him openly; but if La Brinvilliers continues to harass him much longer, nothing can save him. Madame Hamilton is inconsolable, and ruined beyond redemption; she is really to be pitied. Madame de Rochefort † is altered so as not

(whose letters and memoirs have been recently published), seem to me, in adopting the opinion of the poisoning, to furnish themselves the strongest proofs against it. Their accounts are nearly similar.

They first agree that the succory-water Madame drank was not poisoned, because others drank of it after her; but that the silver goblet was so, and even that its edge was rubbed or greased with some drug. Is it not almost incredible, that a poison thus administered, should have had such sudden and violent effects?

According to the different accounts, the chevalier de Lorraine, though absent at that period, was the author of the crime, and had sent the poison from Italy. But how could Lewis XIV., who was struck with horror at it, and who (they say) only breathed so long as he was assured his brother was ignorant of the circumstance, how could he, two years after, restore to his brother this favoured villain, and even make him a field-marshal, as if to console him for his exile? How is it possible to conceive what Madame (de Baviere) herself says, that she was sincerely reconciled to a man whom she considered as a poisoner?

The same remark applies to the marquis d'Effiat, who is supposed to have greased the goblet, and who did not appear at that time, nor subsequently, to have quitted the court.

Mademoiselle de Montpensier, a witness of this death, does not confirm in her narrative the report of the poison. Madame de la Fayette represents Madame as being as ill as she was unhappy, for several days previous to her death. The king does not appear to have given credit to this pretended poisoning.

The Letters of Madame, and the Memoirs de Saint Simon, are full of this humour, which prevents the most sincere from being strictly correct in their statements.

* Francis de Harlai.

† Magdalen de Laval Bois Dauphin.

to be known again, by a double tertian fever: does not that please you? The king's return seems to be every day more distant. You have seen the verses of the abbé Têtu, in which exaggeration appears exaggerated. The answer to them in prose by M. de Pomponne would please you extremely. The abbé has likewise written a letter to M. de Vivonne * much prettier than any of Balzac or Voiture's; the praises in it are not fulsome. Madame de Thianges † had fire-works yesterday before her house, and gave away three hogsheads of wine on account of this victory. Some scaffolding broke, by which two or three people were killed.

I have seen Bussy, he is more gay, happier, and merrier, than ever. He finds himself so much distinguished from the other exiles, and is so sensible of this distinction, that he would not change places with any one. I fancy he is about to marry *La Remiremont* ‡ to the brother of madame de Cauvisson. This is the year of establishment for his daughters. I found, at my arrival, that La Garde's intended marriage had made a great noise here.

You make me completely happy in speaking with such certainty of your journey to Paris; it will be the

* The marshal de Vivonne, on the 2d June, 1676, attacked and defeated the united fleets of Spain and Holland, which had retired into the road of Palermo in the island of Sicily.

For the honour of truth, it must be said, that Duquêne commanded under M. de Vivonne, who, though possessing great wit, was by no means a great general.

In the Œuvres de Boileau, is found a letter containing two others, very pleasantly written in the style of Balzac and Voiture, on the occasion of M. de Vivonne's victory. It is this, probably, which is attributed to the abbé Têtu.

† Sister to M. de Vivonne.

‡ Mary de Rabutin, his daughter, then lady of Remiremont, who afterwards married the marquis of Montalaire.

last and surest method of restoring me to perfect health: now, my dear, I will tell you my plan, which I leave to M. de Grignan's consideration and yours. I would not have you repass the Durance, nor go up to Lambesc again, that will be throwing you too far back into the winter; and, in order to save you that trouble, I should wish you to leave Grignan, when your husband goes to meet the states; to travel in a litter, and take water at Rouen, and you should, in that case, depend upon finding my carriage at Briare to bring you hither. It would be a most admirable time for us to be together. You should there wait for M. de Grignan, who would bring you your equipage, and whom you would have the pleasure of receiving. We should likewise have the pleasure of this little advance, which would afford me no small joy, would save you an infinite deal of fatigue, and me the anxiety of thinking you suffer it. Give me an answer, my dearest child, to this proposal, which, in my opinion, ought to appear as reasonable to you as it does to me; and now let us say a word or two about Villebrune.

I never was more surprised than when I heard of his being at Grignan. I am certain you interrogated him sufficiently about my illness, of which he could give you an account from beginning to end. He has sent me an admirable powder: has he told you its composition? however, I am not to begin to take it till September. He is very proud of the reception he met with from you; I fancy it was not the worse for his mentioning me. I cannot but admire how chance has sent that man to you, as it sent the capuchin to figure with me at Vichi. I must own I think he has a good understanding, and knowledge of his profession: it is to perfect himself in it, that he is going to Montpelier. He has had very long conversations with de Vardes

concerning potable gold. He is greatly esteemed by our Bretons, every one strives who shall get him; and I know nothing amiss of him, except a little failing, to render him unworthy of your protection: he was a great consolation to me at the Rocks.

I have heard nothing farther of what we believe to have been the source of all my disorders, and so I trust I am quite clear of them. I do not absolutely protest against bleeding, should there be real occasion for it. The good man's powders too may come in for their turn, when I have made myself worthy of their operation; for at present the waters of the pump at Vichi have so thoroughly scoured me, that I believe I have nothing left in my body; and you may say as they do in the play, "my mother is a stranger to impurity." I shall just venture to feel the air at Livri; for believe me, my dear, I will make a prudent use of the reins they have thrown upon my neck.

One can only laugh at La Garde's adventure: I assure you, he was asleep; for you know, *l'amour tranquille s'endort aisement,* (the happy lover slumbers undisturbed). Alas! now I mention sleeping, M. de Bassompiere (bishop of Saintes) has sunk into an eternal sleep, after an illness of five and twenty days, during which he was bled thirteen times; yesterday morning his fever had left him, and he thought himself better; he talked a whole hour with the abbé Têtu. This *betterness,* in serious cases, is always deceitful; on a sudden he was seized with the agonies of death, and we have lost him after all. He was a most amiable and deserving man, and his loss is deeply regretted.

It is positively asserted, that Philipsburg is besieged: the Holland Gazette says, that they have lost by sea, what we have lost by land, for de Ruyter was their Turenne. If they could comfort themselves for this loss,

as we did for ours, I should not pity them so much; but I am certain it will never enter into their heads to make eight new admirals * to preserve Messina. For my part, I rejoice in their affliction, for this will render the Mediterranean as safe as a fish-pond, and you know the consequence of this.

I have just received a letter from my son, who is in the detachment with several other troops for Germany. This gives me no trifling concern; and though he endeavours to comfort me, with the assurance that he will make it in his way to call here and take leave of me, I can by no means relish this double campaign.

Adieu, my dearest child: the *worthy* embraces you and assures you that it will give him the greatest joy to see you.

LETTER CCCCXXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, July 3, 1676.

You tell me that it depends on me to regulate your journey; I have regulated it, and in such a manner, that I fancy neither you nor M. de Grignan can raise any objection to it, as your separation will be short, and there will be a great deal of trouble and fatigue saved to yourself, and I shall have a little additional pleasure, which, methinks, will be wholly my own. I have communicated my scheme to d'Hacqueville, who approves it highly. Think of it, my dear, and make your love for me your chief counsellor.

They say the Italian princess (madame de Monaco)

* A jest founded on the promotion of eight marshals of France, who were created a few days after the death of Turenne.

is no longer in such favour with her mistress. You know how severe the latter is on the subject of gallantry; she has taken it into her head, (how unreasonable some people are!) that her favourite has not the same aversion to a tenderness of heart, that she herself has; and this has occasioned strange disturbances. I will procure better information on this subject: what I know of it as yet is all in the clouds.

It seems to me as if I touched too slightly, in my last, on Villebrune: he is greatly esteemed in our province; he preaches well *, and has learning; the prince of Tarente was very fond of him, and owed to him, in a great measure, his conversion, and that of his son. The prince had given him a benefice at Laval worth about 40,000 livres a year; some one, who had pretensions to it, talked of its being fallen into lapse, on an account which you are acquainted with: upon this the abbé du Plessis was beforehand with him at Rome, and procured the benefice; it was against the consent of all his family, that he took this step. However, he reaped no advantage from it, for M. de la Tremouille pretended that the benefice was in his gift, and that his consent was first to be obtained, so that the whole affair came to nothing, only Villebrune remained unprovided for: the abbé du Plessis did not act well, and M. de la Tremouille has not dared to restore the benefice to Villebrune, who has ever since lived in Lower Britany in great credit and reputation. If chance had thrown him among your chapter at Grignan †, I should have thought you very happy in having such a person to consult on all occasions, and an excellent physician into the bar-

* This Villebrune was originally a capuchin. See the Letter of 15th December, 1675.

† There was a chapter at Grignan, which had been founded by M. de Grignan's ancestors.

gain. It is to discover certain secrets, which he supposes reserved only for the sun of Languedoc, that he has taken this journey to Montpelier. Truth obliges me to tell you this. I intend writing to de Vardes to recommend him to his protection. See how insensibly I have run into a long narrative.

La Brinvilliers's affair still goes on in the same way. She administered her poisons in pigeon-pies, by which a great many were killed: not that she had any particular reasons for these murders; it was out of mere curiosity, to try the effects of her drugs *. The chevalier du Guet, who partook of these pretty entertainments about three years ago, has been languishing ever since. She inquired the other day, if he was dead: upon being answered in the negative, she said, turning aside her head, "He must have a very strong constitution then." M. de la Rochefoucault swears this is true.

A delightful party has just left me; for you must know I kept my house for a week after my return from Vichi, as if I had been ill. The party I am speaking of, consisted of the maréchale d'Estrées, the canoness †, Bussy, Rouville, and Corbinelli. Every thing was going on gaily: you never saw a party more lively; when, just as we were at the height of our mirth, who should make his appearance, but the first equerry ‡ in deep mourning? we were all struck dumb at the sight; for my part I was ready to sink into the earth with shame, for not having taken any notice of his wife's §

* Voltaire denies these pretended experiments, and they are not included in the sentence.

†, N*** de Longueval, canoness of Remiremont, sister to the maréchale d'Estrées.

‡ Henry de Beringhen, first equerry to the king.

§ Ann du Blé, aunt to the late marshal d'Huxelles; she died 8th June, 1676.

death. I had intended to pay him a visit with the marchioness d'Huxelles; however, instead of waiting for that ceremony, he came in person to inquire after my health and journey.

The marchioness de Castelnau and her daughter are very attentive to me. I have heard nothing of the siege of Philipsburg since what I last wrote to you. Your brother is not yet gone; he does not go to Germany after all, but is to join marshal Crequi's army. This appears to me a second campaign: that is by no means pleasant. Madame de Noailles told me yesterday, that, without the possibility of being deceived in her reckoning, she was brought to-bed at the end of eight months of a son, who is now a healthy boy of sixteen.

LETTER CCCCXXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, July 6, 1676.

Last night I saw the cardinal de Bouillon, Caumartin, and Barillon; they talked much of you: they are beginning, they say, to reassemble again as messmates; but alas! the dearest of them * is wanting.

M. de Louvois is gone to watch the enemy's motions, who has a design, it is said, upon Maestricht, but the prince will not believe it. He has had several long conferences with the king; and it is rumoured that he will be employed; but he has not presumed to offer his services, and it seems they will not mention the subject first; they wait therefore for expresses from M. de Louvois, before any thing be determined. It is certain that a number of victims have been sacrificed to the manes of

* Cardinal de Retz.

the two heroes of land and sea. I am afraid things in Flanders will not remain so quiet as you imagine. The poor baron * is at Charleville with his company, waiting for orders; the duke of Villeroi is to be general of this little army: they are enjoying the sweets and repose of Capua, which is one of the most beautiful countries in the world. As to Germany, M. de Luxembourg will have little more to do, than barely to stand by as a spectator, with an army of thirty thousand men, while Philipsburg is taken. God grant Maestricht may not share the same fate. The best we can do in that case, according to the prince's opinion, is to take some other place from them, which will be tit for tat. A fool once said on a similar occasion, "Agree to make an exchange of the towns you wish to have; it will save your men." I think there was a great deal of wisdom in this suggestion.

Madame de Rochefort's affliction rather increases than diminishes, and poor madame Hamilton is universally pitied on account of her melancholy situation. She is left with six children, and destitute of provision for them. My niece de Bussy, I mean de Coligni, is a widow. Her husband died in marshal Schomberg's army of a dreadful fever. The marshal's lady has desired me to take her in the afternoon to see this fair mourner, who, in fact, is far from being so: for she declares she knew little of her husband, and has long wished to be a widow. He has left her all his property, so that she will find herself in the possession of fifteen or sixteen thousand livres a year. She would, by her own choice, live regularly, and dine every day at twelve like other people: but her father's attachment to her, and hers to him, will always oblige her to breakfast at four in the

* M. de Sévigné.

afternoon, which is very disagreeable to her. She is on the point of lying in. I think it will be proper for you to write a few lines to the *Rabutinage;* I will place it to my own account.

You are quite right to trust to Corbinelli's love for me, and to rely upon him for the care of my health; he acquits himself perfectly well in both these respects, and to crown all, absolutely adores you. I assure you he handles some little subjects very prettily in verse, as he pretends the ancients did before him; and is of opinion, that rhyme commands the attention more, and is much the same thing as the measured prose which Horace has brought into such credit. These are lofty words. He has written an epistle against flatterers, which would delight you. In short, he is very amusing, for he has always something or other new in his head. Villebrune told me that his powders raised the dead. This, it must be owned, is something like the boy playing at chuck-farthing *. People may think what they please of him, but I know no man like him, for making the most of trifles.

LETTER CCCCXXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, July 8, 1676.

You are undoubtedly right, my dear, in saying that the sentiment of affection which would make you set out instantly to see me, if I required it of you, or if there was a real necessity for it, shows me your heart more plainly, than the most elegant words could do; but as you refer me for advice to d'Hacqueville, and

* An allusion to the miraculous cures in the Medecin malgré Lui.

have done, with respect to me, like the queen-regents, who can take no step without a council, you have given me a master in giving me a companion: you know the proverb. Well, my child, I must tell you what the great d'Hacqueville desired me to acquaint you with yesterday, which is, that he is not ignorant what a pleasure it would be to me to meet you, and not condemn myself to eat the *small fish* * all my life; but considering the fatigue of travelling in a coach, in these broiling days, as a dreadful thing, and which might occasion you a fit of sickness, it is natural to ask, what occasion there is for running all these risks on account of a health that is already much better than it has been? I walk about, and, except my hands, which are still a little stiff, I can wait with pleasure till the month of September, which will be about the time M. de Grignan will be preparing to meet the states; when affection and convenience will concur to induce you to pay me a visit. If you had come to Vichi, and from Vichi here, it would have been all very natural, and comprehensible; but your plans not according with this, and every one knowing you will not come till September, the reason to which you refer me, advises you to let the water return into the river, and to follow the rules we have already laid down to you. We only desire you not to disappoint us then. My health, though better than you imagine, will not be sufficiently restored without this last remedy. By this means, you will please all parties; you are the soul of Grignan, and you will not leave your house and *pigeons*, till you would have left them for Lambesc, and you will at that time come here, and restore me to life. I trust, my dear child, you will approve our d'Hacqueville's wis-

* See the Letter of the 15th of the preceding month.

dom, and will enter into the sentiments of my heart, and the extreme joy I should have in seeing you once more. I am likewise persuaded that M. de Grignan will approve our resolutions, and will even be obliged to me for having deprived myself of the pleasure of seeing you at Vichi, rather than rob him of the satisfaction of having you with him at Grignan this summer; after that, it will be his turn to hunt, and hunt he shall, and we will receive him with pleasure.

I am afraid your letter of the 20th of June is either stolen or strayed. You know, my dearest child, that nothing that comes from you can be indifferent to me, and that, doomed as I am to mourn your absence, your letters are the greatest comfort I have. You always seem to be uneasy respecting my health, and your love creates an anxiety I no longer deserve. It is true, I cannot yet close my hands; but I can move them, and make use of them for most purposes. I cannot cut or pare fruit, nor break eggs; but I eat, I write, I can put on my cap, and dress myself, so that I seem to ail nothing, and I can with great ease bear this little inconvenience. If the summer does not cure me, I am to put my hands into an ox's paunch: but as this will be only in the autumn, I assure you I will wait for you, before I apply this disagreeable remedy; perhaps, too, I may not stand in need of it. I walk very well, and indeed better than ever. I am not so fat as I was, and my back has a *flatness* that charms me. I should be quite grieved to grow fat again, and that you should not see me as I am at present. I have some slight pains in my knees still, but, indeed, they are so trifling, that they are scarcely worth mentioning.

Well, my dear, what think you? do I not talk sufficiently of myself now? This is enough at once, or I am much mistaken. You will have no occasion to ques-

tion Corbinelli any more. He is often with me as well as La Mousse, and they both frequently entertain themselves with your father Descartes. They have undertaken to make me comprehend what they talk of, and I shall be charmed at that, that I may no longer appear a stupid fool, when you are here to join them. I tell them that I will learn this science, as I learned ombre, not to play myself, but to see others play. Corbinelli is delighted with the two faculties of the will which we find in ourselves, without being obliged to go so far in search of them. In fact, my child, we all long to see you; and expect, with fond impatience, the happy hour that brings you to us. I fancy you are alone, and the idea is very painful to me; not that I imagine solitude is so disagreeable to you as it is to many others, but I regret the time we might spend so sweetly together. I have some thoughts myself of going to Livri. Madame de Coulanges says she will join me there, but she is too much taken up at court to be able to absent herself.

The king comes to-day to St. Germain, and by chance madame de Montespan happens to be there at the same time. I think I would have found another method of managing this rencontre, as the affair is merely a matter of friendship. Madame de la Fayette arrived here the day before yesterday from Chantilli in a litter; this is an unpleasant mode of travelling, but her poor side cannot bear a coach. M. de la Rochefoucault has revived the subject of the journey to Liancourt and Chantilli, of which we have been talking these ten years; if they will carry me off by force, they must, I suppose.

Madame is delighted at the return of Monsieur. She every day takes an opportunity of embracing the princess of Monaco, to let the world see, that they are upon better terms together than ever; but, neverthe-

less, I foresee strange disorders in that little court. I have sent M. d'Ormesson to desire the first president to grant me an audience, but it seems he cannot do it till La Brinvilliers' trial is over: who would have thought that our affair would have clashed with hers? Poor Penautier's depends entirely on hers: but wherefore poison poor Maturel, who had twelve children? To me his disorder appears to have been very violent, but in no wise sudden, nor resembling the effects of poison; however, this engrosses the whole conversation here at present. A hogshead of poisoned wine has been found, of which six or seven persons have already died.

I often see madame de Vins. She appears to have a great regard and friendship for you. I am of opinion, that M. de la Garde and you ought on no account to separate; what folly it would be for each of you to keep in your own house, as in the time of the civil wars! I am very glad that I possess his esteem. The marchioness d'Huxelles is wild about his marriage: she can never hold her tongue. When you have nothing else to tell me, let me know all your nonsense of Aix.

M. Marin expects his son * this winter. I can perfectly understand the pleasure you take in the beauty and improvements of Grignan; this became absolutely necessary, when you resolved to make it so much your residence. We shall not see the poor baron at last, the king forbids it. We approve de Ruyter's last words, and admire the tranquillity of your sea.

Adieu, my lovely child: I enjoy luxuriously the hope of seeing and embracing you.

* First president of the parliament of Aix.

LETTER CCCCXXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, July 10, 1676.

MADAME de Villars, who enters warmly into my joy at the prospect of seeing you, told me yesterday, that she considered the letter, in which you make me absolute mistress of regulating the time of your journey, as a bill of exchange, payable at sight, and which it is in my power to receive whenever I think proper. I found the duke de Sault with her, ready to die with laughing at the report which has spread, and still spreads, that the king is returned on account of the besieging of Maestricht, or some other place; this would be a fine step for the poor devils of courtiers, who are just come home without a farthing in their pockets: however, on Sunday next his majesty is to declare his intentions. *Quanto's* good *friend* had determined not to come in till the other party was here ready to receive him; and if any thing had happened to prevent this meeting, he was to have slept at a place thirty leagues off; but, in short, every thing fell out to his heart's desire. The *friend's* household came before him, due time was allotted for the necessary ceremonies, but much more to pure and simple *friendship*, to which the whole night was dedicated *. Yesterday they walked out together, accompanied by some ladies, and were very glad to pay a visit to Versailles before the court came thither, which will be in a few days, provided no earthquakes happen.

Penautier has been confronted with La Brinvilliers.

* This alludes to Lewis XIV. and his mistress madame de Montespan.

It was a very melancholy interview; they were accustomed to meet upon more agreeable terms. She has so repeatedly declared, that if she dies, she will make many others die with her, that there is little doubt that she will draw this poor wretch in to share her fate; or, at least, to be put to the question, which is a dreadful thing. This man has numerous friends, and those of great consequence, whom he formerly obliged, while he was in possession of his two places *. They leave no stone unturned to serve him, and money flies in all directions upon the occasion; but if he is convicted, nothing can possibly save him.

I shall now lay down my pen, and take a stroll into the city, to see if I can pick up any thing to amuse you. My hands are much as usual; if I found them more uncomfortable, I would immediately apply the remedies that have been proposed to me; but I find myself so well stocked with patience to bear them, that I shall wait till I see you, when your company will cure me of the disgust I have to medicine.

I am just returned from the city. I have been at madame de Louvois', madame de Villars', and the maréchale d'Estrées'. I have seen the grand-master †, who talks of setting out on Monday next, whether the king does or not; for if Maestricht should be besieged (as every one believes it will), he says he would not, upon any account, miss the opportunity of distinguishing himself on the occasion. He is a mere boy on this subject; and, instead of declining the service, as his majesty supposed he would have done, upon having others put over his head, he seems resolved to deserve

* Of treasurer-general of the states of Languedoc, and receiver-general of the clergy of France.

† The duke de Luds.

preferment by his service, as if he was no more than a mere cadet.

But this is not what I meant to say to you, the subject has carried me farther than I intended; I have to tell you, that the king intends to set off again; he has been shut up a long time with M. de Louvois. The prince waits with impatience for the result of this conference. The courtiers are all at their wit's-end, not knowing where to find either money or credit; most of them have sold their horses; every thing is in motion; the citizens are for having the prince sent, to save his majesty the fatigue of another journey. The detachment that was sent to marshal de Crequi's army returns back to Flanders. In short, I cannot say, nor can any one else, where this bustle will end.

The *friend* of *Quanto* arrived about an hour before *Quanto*, and, while he was talking to those about him, word was brought him of her arrival: he ran to meet her with great precipitation, and remained with her for a considerable time. Yesterday he walked, as I have already told you, but in *trio* with *Quanto* and her female *friend;* no other person was admitted, and the *sister* * was quite afflicted at it: this is all I know. The *male friend's* wife has wept bitterly. It is whispered, that if her husband goes, she is to accompany him in his journey; but all this will be cleared up in a short time.

Adieu, my dearest and best beloved; I embrace you affectionately. La St. Geran has a fever, at which she is as much surprised, as I was, at *the Rocks*. She has never been ill, any more than I had been at that time.

* The marchioness de Thianges.

LETTER CCCCXXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, July 17, 1676.

At length, it is all over: La Brinvilliers is in the air; after her execution, her poor little body was thrown into a large fire, and her ashes dispersed by the wind, so that whenever we breathe, we shall inhale some particles of her, and by the communication of the minute spirits, we may be all infected with the desire of poisoning, to our no small surprise. She was condemned yesterday; and this morning her sentence was read to her, which was to perform the *amende honorable* in the church of Nôtre-Dame; and, after that, to have her head cut off, her body burnt, and her ashes thrown into the air. They were for giving her the question, but she told them there was no occasion for that, and that she would confess every thing; accordingly, she was till five o'clock in the evening, relating the history of her life, which has been more shocking than was even imagined. She gave poison to her father ten times successively, but without effect, and also to her brother, and several others, at the same time preserving the appearance of the greatest love and confidence. She has said nothing against Penautier. Notwithstanding this confession, they gave her the question, ordinary and extraordinary, the next morning; but this extorted nothing more from her. She desired to speak with the procurator-general: no one yet knows the subject of their conversation. At six o'clock she was carried in a cart, with no other covering than her shift, and with a cord round her neck, to the church of Nôtre-Dame, to perform the *amende honorable*; after which, she was put

again into the same cart, where I saw her extended on a truss of straw, with a confessor on one side, and the hangman on the other: indeed, my child, the sight made me shudder. Those who saw the execution, say, she mounted the scaffold with great courage. I was on the bridge of Nôtre-Dame with the good d'Escars; never was Paris in such commotion, nor its attention so fixed upon one event. Yet, ask many people what they saw, and they will tell you, they saw no more than I did, who was not present; in short, the whole day has been dedicated to this tragedy. I shall know more particulars to-morrow, and you shall have them at second-hand.

It is said, that the siege of Maestricht is begun; that of Philipsburg still continues; this is a melancholy prospect for the spectators. Our little friend * made me laugh very heartily this morning. She says, that madame de Rochefort, in all her grief, has preserved an extreme regard for madame de Montespan; and she mentioned to me, the way in which, amidst her sighs and sobs, she declared how great an affection she had all her life felt for that lady. Are you malicious enough to be as much diverted with this as I have been?

I have another little story for you, but M. de Grignan must not read it. The *little worthy* (M. de Fiesque), who has not wit enough for invention, has said very innocently, that, being one day at the *mouse-trap's* †, she said to him, after a conversation of two or three hours, "*Little worthy*, I have something upon my mind

* Madame de Coulanges.

† The *mouse-trap* is madame de Lionne, as appears by a witticism of madame Cornuel's, mentioned in the Letter of the 17th April, 1676. The Amours des Gaules inform us, that M. de Fiesque was her lover in title of office, whom the great number of his rivals could not prevail upon to resign it.

against you."—"What is it, madam?"—"You do not worship the Virgin; ah! you do not worship the Virgin: this gives me great uneasiness." I wish you may be wiser than I am, and that this ridiculous story may not strike you as it has struck me.

They say L**** † has found his dear rib writing a letter which did not please him: the affair has made a great noise. D'Hacqueville is very busy accommodating matters between them: you may imagine it was not from him I had the story; but it is, nevertheless, true.

LETTER CCCCXXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, July 22, 1676.

Yes, my dear, this is exactly what I wish; I am perfectly contented, and even overpaid for the time I have lost, by the happy clash of M. de Grignan's sentiments with mine. He will be very glad to have you with him this summer at Grignan. I have considered his interest, at the expense of what is dearest to me in the whole world; and he, in his turn, is solicitous to favour me, by not suffering you to return to Provence, and by making your journey hither a month or six weeks sooner; which gives me true pleasure, and prevents your encountering the cold of winter and bad roads. Nothing can be better than this arrangement; it gives me all the joys of hope, which are so much coveted and esteemed. This, then, is fixed: I shall often speak of it, and often thank you for your compliance. My

† M. de Louvigny, second son of marshal de Grammont. D'Hacqueville was the intimate friend of his family.

carriage shall meet you at Briare, if we have any water in the river. The people pass over the Seine every day on foot, and insult the two stately bridges that lead into the isle.

I have just written to the chevalier, who was uneasy about my health; I have informed him that I am very well, but cannot close my hand, nor dance the *bourrée:* these two delightful faculties I must be contented to dispense with for a time; but when you come, you will make a complete cure. I have told you that I dined the other day at Sully at the president Amelot's, in company with d'Hacqueville, Corbinelli, Coulanges, and the good abbé. I was pleased to revisit a house, where I passed my youth, when I was troubled with no rheumatism. However, though my hand still refuses to close, I have so well recovered the use of it, that I am satisfied with the portion of health I enjoy; all my fear is, that I shall grow fat again too soon, and lose the advantage of being seen by you while my back continues flat. Entertain no longer, my dear, any concern for my health, and think only of coming to see me. Our friend Corbinelli is with me, but he will give you an account of himself. Villebrune says that he has cured me; let him have the credit of it; he is not in a situation to neglect any thing, that may procure him such patients as the Vardes and Monceaux; he does well to engage them by any means. Vardes tells Corbinelli that, from this idea, he reveres him as the god of medicine. They may very well amuse themselves with him, on this account, and on many others: he is like a frighted bird; at a loss where to find a bough on which to repose in safety.

Let me tell you a little more of La Brinvilliers. She died as she lived, that is to say, very resolutely. She entered the place where she expected to have been put

to the torture, and seeing three large vessels of water, "This," said she, "must certainly be to drown me; for, considering the smallness of my size, they can never pretend to make me drink so much." She heard her sentence read without the least token of fear or weakness; and towards the latter part of it, she desired them to begin it again, telling them, that the circumstance of the cart had struck her so much as to divert her attention from the rest. In her way to execution, she desired her confessor to place the executioner before her, that she might not see that rascal Desgrais, who had taken her. Desgrais preceded the cart on horseback. Her confessor reproved her for the sentiment, upon which she asked pardon, and submitted to endure the disagreeable sight. She mounted the ladder and the scaffold alone, bare-footed; and the executioner was a quarter of an hour dressing, shaving, and preparing her for the execution: this caused a great murmur among the crowd, and was certainly cruel. The next day her bones were gathered up, as relicks, by the people, who said she was a saint. She had two confessors, one of whom told her that she ought to reveal every thing; the other, that she ought not: she laughed at this diversity of opinions between the learned fathers, and said, she believed she might very conscientiously do which of the two she pleased, and it pleased her to reveal nothing. By this means Penautier is come off whiter than snow: the public, however, is not satisfied, and seems still to entertain some little suspicion. But see the misfortune of it: this creature refused to reveal what they wanted to know, and revealed what nobody asked her to do. For instance, she said M. Fouquet had sent Glaser, the apothecary they employed in preparing their poisons, into Italy, to procure an herb, which is, it seems, a choice ingredient in their myste-

rious compositions; and that she had heard of this at Sainte Croix. You see what pains is taken to load this poor unfortunate man with crimes, and to complete his destruction; but the truth of this information is much suspected. A thousand other things are said, but this must suffice for to-day.

It is said M. de Luxembourg intends to undertake some great exploit to succour Philipsburg; it is a very hazardous attempt. The siege of Maestricht is continued, but marshal d'Humieres is going to take Aire *, as I said the other day, as if engaged with the enemy in a game at chess. He has taken all the troops that were intended for marshal de Créqui; and the general officers who were named for this army are returned to Germany, such as La Trousse, the chevalier du Plessis, and many others. Our youths remain with M. de Schomberg. I had rather they were there, than with marshal d'Humieres. M. de Schomberg favoured our siege, and the fortifications of Condé, as Villahermosa † favoured the siege of Maestricht, and the prince of Orange. All this savours of a warm campaign; but, in the mean time, nothing but amusement is seen at Versailles; every day there are new pleasures, comedies, concerts, and suppers on the water. They play every day in the king's apartment; the queen, the ladies, and the courtiers; their favourite game, at present, is *reversis*. The king and madame de Montespan keep a bank at one table; the queen and madame de Soubize, who plays while the queen retires to prayers, are at another. At the other tables are the prince and M. de Créqui, Dangeau, and Langlé. They game so high as to win or lose every day, two or three thousand louis-d'ors.

* This place was taken on the 31st of July.

† The general of the Spanish troops.

Madame de Nevers* is beautiful as the day, and charms all the world, without exciting envy. Mademoiselle de Thianges, her sister, is tall, and has all the requisites to form a fine woman. The hôtel de Grancey continues to be frequented as it used to be; no change is to be seen there. The chevalier de Lorraine is very languid; his sickly appearance might excite suspicion of his having been poisoned, if madame de Brinvilliers had been his heir. The duke takes up his summer quarters there; but madame de Rohan goes to Lorges: this is a little embarrassing. Do you not wish to hear some news from Denmark? I send you a letter I have just received from the princess de Tarente. It will give you pleasure to learn this instance of lenity in the king: it is diminishing punishments instead of increasing them†. I have received your letter of the fifteenth, informing me of your intentions as to your journey; you speak of it with so much affection, that my heart is pierced to the very centre. I am surprised to find in myself such a sense of justice, and consideration for the Grignans, as to leave you with them till October: I cannot, however, think, without regret, on the loss of so much time, which passes away in your absence, when I might have had you with me. I discover, on this occasion, repentances, and follies, which draw upon me the raillery of d'Hacqueville; he knows that you are, in the mean time, paying the attendance you justly owe to the archbishop of Arles. Do you not find great satisfaction in being capable of doing whatever reason

* Gabrielle de Damas, daughter of Claude Leonor, marquis de Thianges, and of Gabrielle de Rochechouart Mortemart.

† She alludes to Griffenfeldt: the king had changed his sentence, from death, to imprisonment. But what madame de Sévigné adds, is a painful recollection of the unjust severity with which Lewis had aggravated the sentence of Fouquet, by the change he made in it.

prescribes to you? I perceive that you know at present, better than I do, how to pay a just submission to its dictates. I yesterday made the same reflection you have made on Penautier, that his table will be little frequented. I know not how La M*** will behave towards her husband, but she has never been accused of having changed her gallant; d'Hacqueville could, if he pleased, tell us pleasant stories of her. I cannot sufficiently praise the waters of Vichi; they have given me new strength. I am well, for the remain of my disorder is not worth mentioning; when you are here, I will be under your direction; till then, I must think of Livri: I am almost suffocated here, and want air and exercise. You will recognise me by this. The reason you assign for being delighted that M. de Marseilles is created a cardinal, is precisely the same as mine: he will no longer have the joy, or the hope, of being raised to that dignity.

They tell us wonders from Germany: stupid people! they suffer themselves to be drowned by a little rivulet, and have not the wit to turn its course! It is believed that M. de Luxembourg will beat them, and that they will not take Philipsburg. It is not our fault, if they render themselves unworthy of being our enemies. My son is in M. de Schomberg's army, which is now the safest. What do you say to me from the Grignans, who are at present with you? I embrace them all, and salute the archbishop with great respect.

LETTER * CCCCXXXVIII.

FROM MADAME DE GRIGNAN TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Grignan, July 22, 1676.

I ENTREAT you, sir, to make my compliments of condolence to your daughter, on the death of the marquis de Coligny. You know what is proper to be said on this melancholy occasion much better than I do. Mine would be a very ill-timed and common-place compliment, which would not console her, if she is really afflicted, and would appear impertinent, if she is not so. I place my cause, therefore, in your hands, that you may season the assurances I give you of the interest I take in every thing that concerns her. If she has lain in, make this the second head of your discourse. But I suppose this forecast will not exempt me from any thing with respect to you: you will require a letter in quality of grandfather. Let me know whether you are resolved to give me no quarter on this point, that I may begin to prepare myself; for I own I shall find it a very difficult undertaking to address so venerable a personage with becoming reverence. Still I have examples at hand which ought to familiarise me to this ill-placed dignity in those who support it. You are neither younger nor more lively than my mother was, when I subjected her to the same affront. I have desired her to tell you how much I rejoice at your return to Paris. Though mystery is pleasant on a thousand occasions, I dare say you are very well pleased to dispense with it at present. I hope to take advantage of this indulgence myself in the course of the winter. In the mean time, I recommend my mother's spleen to your care, and

request you to preserve me always some little share in your remembrance, and in that of the amiable widow.

LETTER * CCCCXXXIX.

THE COUNT DE BUSSY TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, July 27, 1676.

You are right, madam; you could have written nothing to my daughter which would have compensated for the loss of a husband; and you have much more wit, in my opinion, than you would have had in hers. I shall make your compliments to her, and shall say neither more nor less than I ought to say. This just line cannot be drawn at your immense distance. I shall also tell her of your joy at her safe delivery; but I shall not excuse you from writing to me upon the occasion. I will allow no one but you to jest with me; for, with respect to disposition, I am farther from peevish old age than yourself. Write to me once or twice more, and then come and assist me to remove the obstructions in your mother's spleen. Your absence prevents my remedies from being efficacious.

LETTER CCCCXL.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, July 24, 1676.

I HAVE this morning seen the handsome abbé. We anticipate, in imagination, the pleasure of seeing you, my dear child: this delightful hope diffuses a joy and tranquillity over my life, and has entirely removed the mists of dulness that your absence had occasioned. I

cannot but be well, when I reflect that you are preparing to pay me a visit. D'Hacqueville wishes me to return to Vichi again in the autumn, but I am so tired of travelling, that I cannot think of it. Besides, neither my hands nor knees require so quick a repetition; and I know a receipt that will effect a cure. It is true, I should meet you; but there is no necessity for my being at that trouble to induce you to come; this journey may be better placed another time. I shall therefore rest quietly till you come, and go and cool myself at Livri. The first president sent me word by M. de Ormesson, that as I now know what it is to be ill, I shall the better enter into his intention of going to Basville, to physic and cool himself for a fortnight or three weeks. The queen of Poland * is coming to Bourbon, and I fancy she will come to Paris while she is on her travels; you will then have a sight of her, and an opportunity of admiring what fortune can do.

Penautier is happy; never was a man so well supported; you will find that he will get out of all this, though not clearly justified in the opinion of every one. There were some very extraordinary circumstances in the course of the trial, not so proper to be committed to writing. Cardinal de Bonzi used to say in jest, that none of those who had pensions on his benefices would live long, for that his *star* would kill them. About two or three months ago, the abbé Fouquet, happening to meet his eminence in his carriage with Penautier by his side, said, openly, "I have just met cardinal de Bonzi with his star †." Was not that droll? I did hear a thousand good things to amuse you with some time ago, but

* Marie Casimire de la Grange d'Arquien, the wife of John Sobieski, elected king of Poland in May 1674.

† Cardinal de Bonzi was looked upon as one of those who protected Penautier the most openly.

I have forgotten them all now; as soon as I recollect them, I will send them to you with all possible expedition.

Adieu, my dearest child; it is late, and I am not in a humour for gossiping. I have spent the evening with d'Hacqueville, in madame de la Fayette's garden, where there is a fountain and a little covered arbour: it is the prettiest little place in the world to breathe in at Paris.

LETTER CCCCXLI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, July 29, 1676.

We have here a change of scene, which will appear as agreeable to you, as it does to every one else. I was on Saturday at Versailles with the Villars. You know the ceremony of attending on the queen at her toilette, at mass, and at dinner; but there is now no necessity of being stifled with the heat, and with the crowd, while their majesties dine; for at three, the king and queen, monsieur, madame, mademoiselle, the princes and princesses, madame de Montespan, and her train, the courtiers, and the ladies, in short, the whole court of France, retire to that fine apartment of the king's, which you know. It is furnished with the utmost magnificence; they know not there what it is to be incommoded with heat; and pass from one room to another without being crowded. A game at reversis gives a form to the assembly, and fixes every thing. The king and madame de Montespan keep a bank together. Monsieur, the queen, and madame de Soubize, Dangeau, and Langlé, with their companies, are at different tables. The baize is covered with a thousand louis-d'ors; they use no other counters. I saw Dangeau play,

and could not help observing how awkward others appeared in comparison of him. He thinks of nothing but his game, though he scarcely seems to attend to it; he gains where others lose; takes every advantage; nothing escapes or distracts him; in short, his good conduct defies fortune. Thus, two hundred thousand francs in ten days, a hundred thousand crowns in a month, are added to his account-book under the head, *received* *. He had the complaisance to say I was a partner with him in the bank, by which means I was seated very commodiously. I bowed to the king in the way you taught me; and he returned my salutation, as if I had been young and handsome. The queen talked to me of my illness, nor did she leave you unmentioned. The duke paid me a thousand of those unmeaning compliments, which he bestows so liberally. M. de Lorges attacked me in the name of the chevalier de Grignan; and, in short, *tutti quanti* (all the rest). You know what it is to receive a word from every one who passes you. Madame de Montespan talked to me of Bourbon, and desired me to tell her how I liked Vichi, and whether I had found any benefit there. She said that Bourbon, instead of removing the pain from her knee, had given her the tooth-ache. Her beauty and

* In the eulogium of Dangeau, Fontenelle notices his singular superiority in the art of games. He made the most learned calculations, without seeming to pay the least attention to them. Having asked a favour of the king, he promised to grant it, on condition that, during the time in which he was engaged at play, he should put his request into verse, confining himself to exactly a hundred lines. After the game was over, in which he had appeared no more occupied than usual, he recited his hundred lines to the king, fairly counted. It was not play alone that made his fortune. He was a complete courtier, a species of perfection which leads to many vices and many follies. By this means he furnished Bruyère with the traits of one of his most finished portraits, the character of Pamphilus. (Chapitre des Grands.)

her shape are really surprising; she is much thinner than she was; and yet neither her eyes, her lips, nor her complexion, are injured. She was dressed in French point; her hair in a thousand curls, and the two from her temples very low upon her cheeks; she wore on her head black ribbons, intermixed with the pearls, which once belonged to the maréchale de l'Hôpital, diamond pendants of great value, and three or four bodkins. In a word, she appeared a triumphant beauty, calculated to raise the admiration of all the foreign ambassadors. She has heard that complaints were made of her having prevented all France from seeing the king; she has restored him, as you see, and you cannot imagine the delight this has occasioned, nor the splendour it has given to the court. This agreeable confusion, without confusion, of all the most select persons in the kingdom, lasts from three o'clock till six. If any couriers arrive, the king retires to read his letters, and returns to the assembly. There is always music, to which he sometimes listens, and which has an admirable effect: in the mean time, he chats with the ladies, who are accustomed to have that honour. They leave off their game at the hour I mentioned, without the trouble of reckoning, because they use no marks or counters. The pools are of five, six, or seven hundred, and sometimes of a thousand or twelve hundred, louis-d'ors. In the beginning, each person pools twenty; that makes a hundred, and the dealer afterwards pools ten. The person who holds the quinola is entitled to four louis; they pass, and when they play before the pool is taken, it is a forfeit of sixteen, to teach them not to play out of turn. They talk incessantly. "How many hearts have you? I have two; I have three; I have one; I have four." Dangeau is pleased with this tittle tattle; he discovers the cards they have in their

hands, he draws his consequences, and is directed in his play by their indiscretion : I observed with pleasure his great skill and dexterity.

At six they take the air in calèshes; the king and madame de Montespan, the prince and madame de Thianges, and mademoiselle d'Heudicourt, upon the little seat before, which seems to her a place in paradise. You know how these calèshes are made ; they do not sit face to face in them, but all look the same way. The queen was in another with the princesses : the whole court followed in different equipages, according to their different fancies. They went afterwards in gondolas upon the canal, where there was music : at ten the comedy began, and at twelve they concluded the day with the Spanish entertainment of *media noche;* thus we passed the Saturday. But we came from thence in the afternoon. If I were to tell you how many talked to me of you, how many inquired after you, how many asked me questions without waiting for answers, how many I neglected to answer, how little they cared, and how much less I did, you would own that I had given you a very natural description of *l'iniqua corte* (the wicked court) : however, it never was so agreeable ; every one wishes it may continue. Madame de Nevers is very pretty, very modest, very innocent : her beauty makes me think of you. M. de Nevers is the gayest creature in the world ; his wife loves him passionately. Mademoiselle de Thianges is a more regular beauty than her sister, but not half so charming. M. du Maine is incomparable ; his wit is astonishing, the things he says are beyond imagination. Madame de Maintenon, madame de Thianges, *Guelphes* and *Gibelins* *, are all

* Two celebrated factions, one taking the part of the popes, and the other of the emperors.

assembled. Madame paid me a thousand attentions on account of the good princess de Tarente. Madame de Monaco was at Paris. The prince paid a visit the other day to madame de la Fayette : that prince,

A la cui spada ogni vittoria è certa *.

How is it possible not to be flattered by such a distinction, especially since he is not inclined to obtrude his civilities on the ladies? He talks of the war, and expects news like the rest. We tremble a little at what we may hear from Germany. It is said, however, that the Rhine is so swelled by the melted snow from the mountains, that the enemy is more embarrassed than we are. Rambure has been killed by one of his soldiers, who was discharging his musket very innocently. The siege of Aire continues ; we have lost some lieutenants in the guards, and some soldiers. Schomberg's army is perfectly safe. Madame de Schomberg has begun to love me again : the baron profits by it, in the extreme caresses of his general. The *petit glorieux* (the chevalier de Grignan) has no more to do than the rest. He may perhaps be uneasy at this, but if he be ambitious of a wound or contusion, he must give it himself: God grant he may continue in this idleness. These, my dear, are terrific accounts : you will either be very much tired with or very much amused by them, for they cannot be indifferent to you. I wish you may be in the humour you are in sometimes, when you say, " Why will you not talk to me? well! I wonder at my mother, who would rather die than say a single word to me." Oh! if you are not contented now, I am sure it is not my fault, any more than it is yours if I am not contented with the death of de Ruyter.

* Whose sword is certain of victory.

There are passages in your letters that are excellent. You say truly on the subject of the marriage, that prudence directs it, but that it is a little late in the day. Continue me in the good graces of M. de la Garde, and always remember me to M. de Grignan. The similarity of our opinions on the subject of your departure has renewed our friendship.

You think that I have always a fancy to speak wonders of the grand-master: I do not absolutely deny it; but I thought you would have taken it for raillery, when I told you the desire he has to become a marshal of France, and to enjoy that dignity in its ancient lustre. But you seem inclined to oppose whatever I say on this subject; the world is extremely partial: its partiality has been very apparent in the case of La Brinvilliers. Never were such horrid crimes treated so mildly: she was not put to the question; they even gave her hopes of a pardon, and such hopes, that she did not expect to die; nay, even when she was mounting the scaffold, she asked whether it was in earnest; at length, her ashes are dispersed by the wind: and her confessor says she is a saint. The first president made choice of this doctor, as a person very proper to attend her; and it was the very same they had fixed upon. Have you never observed those who play tricks on cards? they shuffle them a long time, and bid you take whichever you please; they would have you think it is indifferent to them: you take a card, and think it to be your own choice, but find it to be precisely the same they designed you should take. This comparison is perfectly just. Marshal de Villeroi said, the other day, that Penautier would be ruined by this affair; marshal de Grammont replied, that he might save the expense of keeping a table. The conversation of these two great men might furnish a pretty subject for an epigram. I

suppose you know, it is believed, that a hundred thousand crowns have been dispersed in proper hands to facilitate matters: innocence seldom makes such profusions. Nothing can be more just than what you have said of this horrible woman. I believe you may be easy, for it is not possible she can be in paradise; a soul so deeply stained with guilt must surely be separated from others. We are entirely of your opinion, that it is far better to assassinate. This is a mere trifle, in comparison of being eight months in killing a father; and receiving in the mean time his complaints and caresses; to which this pious daughter answered, only by redoubling the dose.

Tell the archbishop of Arles what the first president has advised me to do for my health. I have shown my hands, and almost my knees, to Langeron, that he may tell you exactly how I am. I use a sort of liniment, which I am told will complete my cure. I shall not have the cruelty to plunge myself into bullock's blood till the dog-days are over. But it is you, my dear child, that must complete my cure. If M. de Grignan could but conceive the pleasure he does me in approving your journey, it would recompense him for the six weeks he is to be without you.

Madame de la Fayette is on very good terms with madame de Schomberg. The latter is wonderfully obliging to me, and so is her husband to my son. Madame de Villars thinks seriously of going to Savoy; she will meet you upon the road. Corbinelli always adores you: he takes infinite care of me. The *worthy* begs you will believe that he shall have the truest joy on seeing you; he is fully persuaded that I stand in great need of this remedy, and you know the friendship he has for me. Livri is continually recurring to my thoughts, and I frequently complain of being stifled

here, in order to make them all the more ready to acquiesce with my journey.

Adieu, my dearest, my best-beloved. You entreat me to love you; I willingly consent to it, it shall not be said that I refuse you any thing.

LETTER CCCCXLII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, July 31, 1676.

It is said there will be an illumination to-morrow at Versailles. Madame de la Fayette, and madame de Coulanges, are just gone. I wish you had been here: after having seen the good Villarses, and searched in vain for mademoiselle de Meri, I am returned hither to write to you, which is all the pleasure I can have, till the greater one of seeing you arrives. Even the good abbé is at Livri, so that I spend this evening very agreeably with you, my dear child. All those who have any interest in what passes in Germany and Flanders, are under some concern. We expect every day to hear of M. de Luxembourg's having beaten the enemy, and you know what happens sometimes in these cases. They have made a sally upon Maestricht, in which the enemy had above four hundred men slain. The siege of Aire goes on as usual. The duke of Villeroi, and a large detachment of cavalry, have been sent to reinforce marshal d'Humieres; I fancy your brother will be of the party, but notwithstanding he is pretty mindful in writing to me, yet, I know not how it happens, I have never letters like other people, which makes me uneasy. I have even put off, for some time, going to Livri, to see how these affairs will be cleared up. M. de Louvois has, by his own authority, ordered M. de Schomberg

nearer to Aire; and has written his majesty word, that he was afraid the delay of a courier might injure his affairs. Make your own notes upon this text.

While I am chatting with you, I may as well say something of the grand-duchess, and madame de Guise*. They are upon such very bad terms together, that they do not speak, though they meet every day in the same places. The grand-duchess is in favour with the king; she has an apartment at Versailles, where she makes sometimes a pretty long stay. She is gone to the illumination; and in a short time, her prison will be a court, and a strict attachment to her own agreeable family. The grand-duke has been informed that the retirement he had been promised, had been ill observed; this he said was of little consequence, for in placing his wife in the hands of the king, he had removed from his own mind all anxiety respecting her conduct. The count de Saint Maurice told me yesterday, that the grand-duke, seeing a nobleman of Savoy at his court, said to him with a sigh: "Ah, sir! how happy you are in the possession of a princess of France, who thinks it no martyrdom to reign in your heart!"

There is a rumour afloat of Theobon, as if, although duels were forbidden, yet a rencontre was permitted; but this I mention merely as hear-say, for I know nothing about it for a certainty. Your cousin d'Harcourt has taken the veil at Montmartre; the whole court was present at the ceremony. Her fine locks hung carelessly down her shoulders; and on her head she had a wreath of flowers, and looked so sweet and innocent a victim, that, it is said, no one present could refrain from tears.

* These two princesses were daughters of Gaston of France duke of Orleans, and of Margaret of Lorraine.

You are too good, to speak as you do of the Rabutins; I should heartily detest them, were they to honour and esteem you less than they do. M. d'Alby * is dead, and has left immense treasures to the duke de Lude. Alas! how saint-like has our good M. de Saintes † disposed of his estate, in comparison with that wretched miser! Here are noble benefices vacant: the bishopric of Alby is worth 25,000 crowns per annum; it is erected into an archbishopric: but you knew before we did that there is still a much more noble one to be disposed of, I mean the sovereign pontificate. M. de Rome ‡, as M. de Noyon says, is at length dead. I wait for d'Hacqueville to know what our good cardinal (de Retz) will do; if he should set out for Rome, you must leave nothing undone to have the pleasure of seeing him as he comes your way.

M. de Marseilles is still considerably behindhand; the new pope will promote his own creatures first, and afterwards those of the several crowns, but it is not quite certain, whether that of Poland § will be included among the latter; that is, according to the pope. If they are inclined to quibble, they may say that the crown of Poland has only the solicitation, and not the right of nomination, as those of France and Spain; or if it could nominate, who can say that the lot would fall upon M. de Marseilles? In short, there is plenty of

* Gaspard de Daillon, uncle to the duke of Lude, and archbishop of Alby.

† See the Letter of the first of this month.

‡ Clement the Xth, who died July 2, 1676. It is plain, that the ridiculous pride of the bishop de Noyon, led him to speak of the pope as of an equal.

§ The bishop of Marseilles had the nomination of the king of Poland.

time. Did I tell you that madame de Savoy * has sent a hundred ells, of the most beautiful velvet that ever was seen, to madame de la Fayette, and as many ells of satin for lining; and that she has sent her, within these two days, her picture set in diamonds, valued at three hundred louis-d'ors? I know nothing more delightful than the power of giving, and the will of doing it, like this princess.

I have just had a conversation with d'Hacqueville. The king has very earnestly entreated our good cardinal to go to Rome; he has lately received a courier; they are all to go by land, because the king has no galleys to furnish them with for their passage, so that you will not have an opportunity of seeing him. We are under great uneasiness about his health; but fully confide in his known prudence and abilities, for accommodating the language of the Holy Spirit with the service of his king. We shall have occasion to talk again about this journey.

Madame de Schomberg most certainly loves and esteems you highly, and thinks you superior to any other person; it will depend upon yourself this winter not to destroy all this; she is however not satisfied with M. de Grignan, whom she has always loved, because he is amiable, and because her friend adores him. She thought that, knowing she was so near Provence, he ought to have come four or five leagues to see her, and offer her all the accommodations in his power, which, however, she would not have accepted. This is a kind of amorous reproach.

Listen to me, my dear child: when the governor of

* Maria-Jeanne-Baptiste of Savoy Nemours, who was regent for her son Victor-Amédée François.

Maestricht * made his famous sally, the prince of Orange flew to the assistance of his troops with incredible valour, and repulsed our people sword in hand, to the very gates; in doing this, he was wounded in the arm: upon which, turning to some who had not behaved well, "This is the way you should have acted, gentlemen," said he; "you are the cause of this wound, for which you appear so much concerned." The rhingrave followed him, and received a wound in the shoulder. There are places, in which it is so dangerous to give this action all the praises it merits, that it is thought better to take no notice of the advantage we have gained.

I have just heard for a truth, that the rejoicings at Versailles are deferred for some days. You are perfectly easy I find respecting the state of La Brinvilliers' soul: no one can doubt the justice of God; and it is with infinite regret, I find myself obliged to resume the opinion of eternal punishment.

LETTER CCCCXLIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, Aug. 5, 1676.

I WILL begin to-day with my health; I am very well, my dear child. I have seen the honest de Lorme since his return hither, and he has severely scolded me for not going to Bourbon; but this is all nonsense, for he acknowledges that the waters of Vichi are as good for drinking: "But then you should sweat, said he;" and so I have, even to excess; consequently there is no occa-

* M. de Calvo commanded in Maestricht during the siege, in the room of marshal d'Estrades, who was the governor.

sion for changing my former opinion as to the choice of place. He is not for my drinking the waters in autumn, but will have me begin the powders in September. He says nothing need be done for the little one, and that its skull will harden like that of others in time. Bourdelot has told me the same thing, and that the bones are the last parts completed. He is for my walking a great deal, and is sending me to Livri.

It is a sign La Brinvilliers is dead, by my having so much leisure time upon my hands. However, I have something to say about Penautier: his clerk, Belleguise, is taken: it is not known whether this will be the better or the worse for him; people, in general, are so disposed to think favourably of him, that I believe, if he were to be hanged at last, some excuse would be found for him. It is said at court, that the king had this clerk apprehended in the out-skirts of the town. The parliament is greatly blamed for its negligence; and, after all, it appears that the discovery of this man was owing to the diligence and liberality of the attorney-general *, and that the search cost him above two thousand crowns. I was a whole hour yesterday in company with this magistrate, who, beneath the garb of gravity, conceals a very amiable and accomplished mind. M. de Harlai Bonnevil was with me: I dare not tell you how well I was received; he talked a great deal to me about you and M. de Grignan.

Aire is, at length, taken. My son writes me a thousand handsome things of the count de Vaux †, who was one of the foremost in action; but, at the same time, greatly censures the besieged, who suffered us to take, in one night, the covered way, the counterscarp, to pass a ditch full of water, and possess ourselves of

* Achilles de Harlai, afterwards first president.

† M. Fouquet's son.

the out-works of the finest horn-work that ever was seen, and at last capitulated without striking a blow. They were so thunder-struck with the fire of our artillery, that the muscles of the back which act in turning, and those which move the legs for flight, were not to be stopped by the wish of acquiring renown; and this it is that makes us take so many towns. M. de Louvois has all the honour of this affair; he has unlimited power, and makes armies advance, or retire, as he thinks proper. While all this was doing, there were great rejoicings at Versailles; they took place on the Saturday, notwithstanding what was said to the contrary, and were the prelude to the news of this success. In short, there are continual feasts and balls; for the king's good fortune, joined to the abilities of those who serve him, give us every hope of success, without the fear of being disappointed. My mind is quite easy at present respecting military affairs.

I have just had a letter from cardinal de Retz, in which he takes leave of me before he goes for Rome. He set out on Sunday the 2d instant, and will take the same road as you and I did once, where we were so prettily overturned; he goes straight to Lyons, from whence, with the rest of his brethren, he takes the road to Turin, because his majesty cannot spare them his galleys; so that you will not have the pleasure of seeing his dear eminence. I am uneasy about his health; he was under a course of medicine, but made every thing give way to the pressing entreaties of his royal master, who wrote to him with his own hand. I hope the change of air, and diversity of objects, will do him more service than living and studying in solitude.

So M. de Grignan is with you at last; I wish you had treated him like a stranger: he certainly performs won-

ders for his majesty's service, and I take care to say so on all occasions; for I frequently talk of him with d'Hacqueville, who has so perfectly restored peace and harmony among the Grammont family, that not a word is mentioned about any thing; they may thank his prudent and wise management for this, for there were doubtless materials in the affair to have furnished ample matter of diversion to the public. Your replies to the idle things I wrote to you, are infinitely preferable to the things themselves. Nothing can be more pleasant than not saying a word to M. de la Garde, of a thing, that, at the same time, takes up all your attention: pray let me know when I may write to him upon this subject.

I return M. de Grignan many thanks, for his goodness to the chevalier de Sévigné, when he saw him at Toulon. He is my godson, you know; I have had a letter from him, written in all the transports of gratitude. If M. de Grignan should have an opportunity of speaking or writing in his favour, it would delight me. He is quite weary of being a lieutenant. I have been told he is a brave youth, and very deserving of a ship. If M. de Grignan is of the same opinion, you will do well to put him in mind of him.

M. de Coulanges is going soon to Lyons; he means to return before All Saints, which will be just about the time of your coming hither. I would advise you to concert measures for coming together; he will steer your bark gaily, and you will be infinitely pleased with such a companion.

I think the *pigeon* very pretty, and you will be of infinite service to him, by amusing yourself, as you do, with his dawning reason; this attention to his improvement will be a great advantage to him. Pray forgive all his little faults, which he honestly confesses, but never overlook a lie.

When you read the History of the Vizirs, let me advise you not to stop at the *heads cut off* and lying on the table; do not shut the book at this passage, but continue till you come to the son*; and then, if you find a more truly honest man among the whole race of Christians, say I have deceived you.

You are apprehensive, you say, my dear child, that I am awkward with my hands: not in the least; this inconvenience I suffer affects only myself, and is not perceptible to any one else. In a word, I am as like, as two drops of water, to your *bellissima*, except that I have a finer shape than formerly; but you are, after all, too good and kind, in thinking so much of my health. Be under no uneasiness about Livri. I shall conduct myself there with great prudence, and shall return before the fogs come on, provided it be to meet you. I expect from Parère † this little business of the fines of Buron; if he says you must purchase them, we will learn to belie our great Diana ‡.

I have a little story to relate to you, which you may believe as firmly as if you had been an ear-witness to it. The king said, a few mornings ago, "I am of opinion that we shall not be able to relieve Philipsburg; but, after all, I shall not be less king of France." M. de Montausier §, who would not say a thing he did not think for the pope himself, replied, "It is certain, sire, you would not be less king of France, though the ene-

* Achmet Coprogli, pacha, was made grand-vizir upon the death of Mahomet Coprogli, his father. The Lives of the father and son are very entertaining and interesting.

† M. de Pomponne's principal secretary.

‡ He was a regular clergyman of Palermo in Sicily, and is often mentioned in the Petites Lettres, for having favoured in his writings the relaxed opinions in favour of morals.

§ Preceptor to the king's children, and remarkable for speaking his mind the most openly of any person at court.

my were to retake Metz, Toul, Verdun, and the whole Franche Comté, together with a number of other provinces, which your predecessors did very well without." Upon this every one present was struck dumb. But the king replied with a very good grace, "I understand you perfectly, M. de Montausier; you mean to say, that you think my affairs are in a bad situation; but I take what you say in good part, as I am convinced of your loyalty and affection." All this is strictly true, and I think each supported his character admirably.

The baron (de Sévigné) is very well. The chevalier de Nogent, who is come express with the news of the capture of Aire, has mentioned him to the king as a person who has given proofs of his attachment to his service. The duke is very gay; he hunts, he goes to Chantilli and Liancourt: in a word, they are all glad to make hay while the sun shines. M. de Nevers is under no uneasiness about his wife, for her conduct is strictly correct; he considers her almost as his daughter, and if she were to give herself the least airs of coquetry, he would be the first to perceive, and chide her for it; she is with child, and very languid. My niece de Coligni * is brought to bed of a son; she says she shall take a great pride in bringing him up. So then Paulina is the count's favourite, and her sister Colette † thinks of nothing but a veil!

* Louisa de Rabutin, marchioness of Coligni.

† M. de Grignan's eldest daughter by his first wife.

LETTER CCCCXLIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, August 7, 1676.

To-morrow I go to Livri, my dear; it is necessary that I should, or, at least, I think so. But this will not prevent my writing to you as usual, nor will our correspondence suffer the least interruption from it. I have seen some of the folks from court; and they are persuaded that Theobon's opinion is ridiculous, and that *Quanto's* power was never more firmly established. She now finds herself superior to all opposition, and has no more apprehensions of the little sluts her nieces, than if they were turned to charcoal *. As she has a great share of understanding, she appears to be quite exempt from the fear of having shut up the wolf in the sheep-fold. Her beauty is extreme; her dress equal to her beauty, and her sprightliness equal to her dress.

The chevalier de Nogent † has again mentioned the baron to the king, as having done things even beyond what his duty exacted of him, and he has said the same to a thousand others. M. de Louvois is returned, covered with laurels and applause. I fancy Vardes will bring you the grand-master, who is going to receive a trifling legacy of 400,000 crowns. Vardes will wait for him at Saint Esprit, and I have a notion will take him with him to Grignan; perhaps, too, they may think of no such thing.

M. du Maine is an extraordinary child; he is defi-

* Madame de Nevers, and mademoiselle de Thianges, afterwards duchess of Sforza.

† See the preceding Letter.

cient neither in tone of voice nor shrewdness; he has a blow every now and then, as well as the rest of the court, at M. de Montausier; this occasioned my expression of *l'iniqua corte.* Seeing him one day pass by his window with a little wand in his hand, he called out to him, "What, M. de Montausier, never without the staff of office?" Give to this the tone and meaning with which it was uttered, and you will not find many such instances in a child of six years old. But he is every day saying a thousand such things. A few days ago he supped on the canal in a gondola, near that in which the king was: he has been told not to call him papa; but having occasion to drink, he said aloud, "The king my father's health," and then threw himself into madame de Maintenon's lap ready to die with laughing. I know not why I have singled out these two things to tell you, for I assure you they are the most trifling of any he has said.

The king has presented M. le Grand's son with the late bishop of Alby's fine abbey (of Chastilliers), valued at 25,000 livres per ann. My zeal in your affairs has led me to speak in person to M. Picon about your pension, who told me that the abbé de Grignan had it in his power to bring it about, so that I have nothing to do but to rouse the handsome abbé, without seeming to follow his steps, for I always distrust indolent people. I am indolent only in my own affairs: I wish other people were like me. The handsome abbé has interrupted me, and has assured me, he will order matters so, that we shall have no occasion to fear having our pension. Write a line or two to him, and that will stimulate him to perform wonders; he will likewise settle the marquis's patent in a proper manner. Parere promises me every day to expedite the fines; he is a strange friend: he stammered out a thousand protesta-

tions to me the other day: I believed the affair settled, and nothing is done yet. I have also seen what was written to the handsome abbé on the reconciliation of the father and son; nothing can be more entertaining. This retreat in the midst of an archbishopric, and this Thebaid in the street of St. Honoré, have extremely diverted me. Retreats do not always succeed; they should be carried into execution without talking of them; but they have promised the abbé to inform him of the subject of this curious reconciliation, with which I am greatly edified. Let me beg, my dear child, that I may hear it from you.

We wait in trembling expectation for news from Germany; a great battle must have taken place there: however, I shall go to Livri; whoso loves, let him follow me. Corbinelli has promised to come and teach me to look on, as I told you the other day. This has diverted me highly.

LETTER CCCCXLV.

TO THE SAME.

Begun at Paris the 11th, and finished at Livri, Wednesday, Aug. 12, 1676.

Old de Lorme, Bourdelot, and Veson, have forbidden me to think of Vichi again this year; they think it would not be prudent to venture upon one dose of heat so close upon another: as to next year, it is another affair; we shall see how it will be; but let d'Hacqueville say what he pleases, there is no daring to venture upon this journey, in direct opposition to the advice of those very physicians who were so ready to send me thither when they thought it necessary: I am not at all obstinate, but suffer myself to be led, with a docility I did not possess before my illness. You will be rejoiced to

find me as I am: the little infirmity that hangs about me, is so trifling, as to deserve neither your regard nor uneasiness.

D'Hacqueville is to have another interview with M. de Pomponne, in which he will thoroughly discuss your affairs, and will acquaint you with the result. I write this before I set out for Livri, where I purpose being to-morrow morning, and where I shall finish this.

I wish you could see the description you have given me of the *pigeon's* shape. I am glad it was so exaggerated by your apprehensions, for at last it will turn out that he is a very pretty little fellow, with a great deal of understanding; and this is the mighty affair that I was to call a consultation of matrons about. Nothing can surely be more diverting, than what you say about La S***. what a head! Can she have the confidence to show herself when you are present? What the Grenoble ladies said is so droll, and so just, that I cannot help thinking you have said it for them. There is too much imagination in it for provincial manners.

The archbishopric of Alby is given to M. de Mende †, but loaded with twelve thousand francs in pensions, viz. 3000 to the chevalier de Nogent, 3000 to our friend M. d'Asen, and 6000 to M. de Nevers. I can see no reason for the latter, unless it is to increase the band of music that he keeps for his diversion every evening.

How delighted I am, that you have finished the *Vizirs!* Tell me, truly, do you not love the last of them? It must be owned, that this book is not well written; but, nevertheless, the events are well worth reading. It seems as if this queen of Poland were not

† Hyacinthus Serroni, bishop of Mende, and the first archbishop of Alby, was a Dominican friar at the time that he followed cardinal Mazarin out of Italy into France. Mazarin himself had been a monk, and general of the same order.

coming after all; perhaps she is waiting for the grand-seignor or the grand-vizir we are so much in love with.

The princess of Harcourt* was delivered of a dead child six weeks ago, and was very near death, but she is now better; and what will complete her cure is, that they have removed her to Clagny that the noise of the town may not disturb her. Madame de Montespan takes the greatest care imaginable of her: God knows whether she will show proper gratitude.

From Livri.

I have just received your letter of the second. You have been at St. Esprit, you see what it is to be very much tired: you might, however, have written only two lines to me; I should have taken it very kindly of you. It would have been curious if you had stumbled upon the grand-master there; I know you are of opinion, that I should have been more diverted with the adventure than you. I am in hopes I shall see Gourville soon; I will speak to him about the affair of Vénejan: it is a charming situation; I would not have it sold for a song, as estates are sold now in France. Poor de Tellier has purchased Barbesieux, one of the most beautiful estates in the kingdom, at sixteen years' purchase: it is perfectly ridiculous. Perhaps the prince of Conti, or his council, would choose to purchase in this manner, as you do not sell Vénejan by a decree. As for Caderousse, I can see no hopes of making up matters with him, but by playing his game at primo for him with M. de Grignan. I beg you would use no ceremony in sending me the bride's commissions; pray consider me as one of the cabbages in your garden: I shall be delighted to take a trip to Paris on so good an errand. The good d'Escars will show us some of her

* Frances de Brancas, wife to Alphonso-Henry-Charles of Lorraine, prince of Harcourt.

dexterity with pleasure. You have only to employ us, and you will have reason to be satisfied with our services.

I am informed from Paris, that there is no news from Germany yet. The uneasiness that is felt on account of the approaching battle, which is thought to be unavoidable, is like a violent fit of the colic, and has lasted now almost a fortnight. M. de Luxembourg kills us with couriers, whereas poor M. de Turenne never sent any: after gaining a victory, he informed us of it by the post. Our Flemish canons are in perfect health; as is our good hermit, who wrote to me on the seventeenth from Lyons, where he arrived in five days from his hermitage. He waits the arrival of his colleagues; had it been left to him to fix the route, he tells me he should have been twelve days only in going from Lyons to Rome.

M. d'Hacqueville has had a good deal of conversation with M. de Pomponne, and nothing farther can be done in the affair of your marquisate, but to dispose of it with the title, which is sure to render an estate the more valuable; so that, if the purchaser is of the rank required, it will be easy for him to obtain letters in chancery, creating him marquis of Mascarille.

The abbé de Chevigni is no longer our bishop of Rennes, he prefers the expectation of the bishopric of Poitiers; the bishop of Dol is come to Rennes, and the abbé de Beaumanoir to Dol. You wish me, my dear, to speak of the state of my health; it is even better here than at Paris; the asthmatical symptoms disappeared at first view of the horizon of our little terrace: there have been no evening dews yet; on perceiving the least cold, I retire to my apartment. They have made a window in the little study, that opens into the garden, which perfectly removes the moist and un-

wholesome air that it formerly had: but besides this improvement, it is not in the least hot, for it has the sun upon it only an hour or two at his first rising. I am alone; the good abbé is at Paris. I read with the father-prior, and am now engaged in the Memoirs of M. de Ponti, a gentleman of Provence, who died at Port-Royal about six years ago, upwards of fourscore years of age. He gives an account of his life, and of the reign of Lewis XIII. *, with so much truth, simplicity, and good sense, that I can scarcely prevail upon myself to lay him aside. The prince has read him from beginning to end with the same eagerness. This book has many admirers; there are some, however, who cannot endure it; and indeed one must either like or dislike it extremely, there is no such thing as observing a medium in this affair: I would not, however, swear you would like it.

The reason why you do not think you shall be able to prevail on me to go to Vichi, which is, that I may see you and bring you back, is that, of all others, which would naturally determine me to it, and the only one in the world that seems worthy my attention. I should therefore set out without the least hesitation, were I persuaded this were at all necessary; but I think my bills accepted with too much honour, to be in any doubt of their being punctually paid. I shall therefore expect you, my beauty, with all the joy you may possibly conceive, from an affection like mine.

* Lewis de Ponti, a gentleman of Provence, who, after having spent fifty six years in the army in the service of three of our kings, thought it time to retire in 1653, and to hide himself from the world, at Port-Royal des Champs, where he led a life of piety and penitence, and died June 24, 1670. As Thomas de Fossé was the person who arranged the Memoirs in question, this work was judged to belong to Port-Royal; and it is owing to this, that it was not equally well received by every one.

LETTER CCCCXLVI.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Friday, August 14, 1676.

My dear child, I am in perfect health at this place: I am more sensible of the magnitude of my late illness, from my dread of a relapse, and my precautions with regard to the evening dews, than from any thing else; for you remember the supreme pleasure I used to receive from fine evenings and moonlight. I thank you for thinking of me in that enchanting season. Mesdames de Villars, de Saint Gelais, d'Heudicourt, mademoiselle l'Estranges, the *little soul*, and the little ambassadress, came here yesterday at noon; the weather was charming. A slight suspicion of their intention occasioned a slight degree of providence on my part, which furnished an excellent dinner. I have a very good cook; you shall give me your opinion of his performance. They tell me there is no news from Germany yet. It is dying by inches, to feel such uneasiness for ten or twelve days successively; the marchioness de la Trousse, who is returning from La Trousse, will discover her game all at once, such as it really is, good or bad; for she will suddenly open upon it, and suspense, like two equal players, will have no concern in the business. I am, however, of opinion, that the strongest love will not seek to spare itself: what think you?

The king has given M. du Plessis, grand-vicar of Notre-Dame, and a very worthy man, the bishopric of Saintes: his majesty said publicly, "I have this morning given away a bishopric to one whom I never saw." This is the second: the other was the abbé de Barillon,

bishop of Luçon. The beautiful madame de Montespan begins to be somewhat weary of the public exhibition; she has been, for two or three days together, unable to put on her clothes. The king plays still, but not quite so long at a time. If this change of scene does not last, it must be because it is too pleasing to continue. They affect to have no private hours; every body is of opinion, that good policy requires that there should be none, and that, were it still the fashion, it would certainly be discontinued.

Madame de Villars is going to Savoy in good earnest, to play a very pretty part; she has a most magnificent carriage, lined with crimson velvet, a fine house, and every thing else. One of her pleasures, she says, will be, that she shall fall in love with nobody in that country; a melancholy sort of pleasure truly. That of d'Heudicourt, who is returning to her own house for some weeks, is not a whit more gay. The manner of that country, as you know, is to overwhelm you with embraces enough almost to turn one's brain, and presently after not to know you; but, above all, to take every thing with an air of the greatest indifference possible. This unconcernedness well deserves to be repaid in kind by poor mortals, but there is bird-lime in their very looks. Farewell, my beautiful charming child: I do not now chatter at the rate I used to do at Paris; I am sorry for it, on your account, since my descriptions amuse you.

LETTER CCCCXLVII.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Wednesday, Aug. 19, 1676.

I MUST chide you, my child, for bathing yourself in that little river, which, by the bye, is no river, and which only assumes that great name, as some folks do that of great families: it however deceives nobody, all the world knows how the matter is: and here comes a M. le Laboureur, who has laid open its source, and proves, that its true name is the Fountain; but neither that of Vaucluse, of Arethusa, nor of Health; but a little fountain without a name, and without renown; this is the noble stream in which you have been bathing. I am almost dead with fear, lest you should have caught the rheumatism by this bold step, or at least a violent cough; nor shall I be cured of my apprehension, till I hear how you are. Heavens! had I done this, what a life you would have led me!

I suppose you already know that the German mountain is brought to bed of a mouse at last, without pain, or so much as a groan. One of our friends, whom you love in proportion to his care of me, tells me he is perfectly at a loss how to keep you and me within bounds on this occasion; that a devil of a wood was discovered in the map, which hemmed us in so as to render it impossible for us to draw up in order of battle, except in the face of the enemy; for which reason, we were obliged to retreat on the 10th, and to abandon Philipsburg to the brutality of the Germans. M. de Turenne had never discovered this wood, so that we find every day less reason to lament his loss. We are, moreover,

in fear for Maestricht, because the army of our allies is in no condition to succour it. It would be a fresh disappointment, were the Swedes to be driven out of Pomerania. The chevalier de Grignan informs me the baron played the fool at Aire; he placed himself in the trenches, and on the very counterscarp, with as much indifference and unconcern, as if he had been at home by his fire-side. He had taken it into his head, that he should have the regiment of Rambures, though it was that very instant given away to the marquis de Feuquieres; in this idea, he exposed himself as if he had been a common sentinel.

You wish a formal reconciliation to take place with madame de Heudicourt; this cannot be *. We must leave it to time to efface impressions; we may see her again; her easy manners are pleasing; she is formed for trifling; she does not strike the imagination with any thing new; and if she is indifferent about us, we know how to do without her: one advantage, however, she certainly has over all others, that we are accustomed to her. She is now, then, in her carriage, and, as her apartment is wanted, is going away: there is not much zeal however displayed, in procuring another: another time will do for that. This is the sandy foundation upon which we build, and this the broken reed to which we trust.

The archbishop (of Arles) writes us astonishing things of your care and attention to him. I can never sufficiently praise you for your conduct in this particular, which is at once so just and proper. There are certain duties of civility, which I hold absolutely indispensable; nothing can possibly excuse, in my opinion,

* She had spoken ill of madame de Maintenon, and a quarrel had, in consequence, taken place between them.

ingratitude. It is to this good and venerable patriarch you owe the order and regularity of your house, and if you have the misfortune to lose him, his loss would be, indeed, irreparable.

They who betted that our worthy cardinal would go to Rome, have certainly won. He reached Lyons two days before the rest of the company; I am persuaded, like you, that this step was necessary, because he has taken it, but it will be a difficult matter to make the rest of the world believe so. I say the same with respect to the marriage of M. de la Garde. It is really pleasant to hear the marchioness d'Huxelles* speak as coolly of it, as of a friend who has deceived her, and played her a trick.

I commend you exceedingly for returning to your old way of bathing in your chamber. Should you observe any of the subjects of my letters out of place, I must inform you it is owing to this; that as I receive one of yours on the Saturday, I cannot be easy till I have written an answer to it; on Wednesday morning I receive another, so that I frequently resume the topics I had mentioned before; this may make me appear rather impertinent, but I have told you the reason. It is now more than a fortnight since I answered your letter, relative to d'Alby. M. de Mende has received it loaded with pensions.

I am told the fine lady has been seen again in her fine apartment, as usual; and that the secret of her uneasiness was a slight fit of anxiety about her friend, and madame de Soubise. If there is any thing in this, we shall soon see the latter wither in her bloom; there

* Marie de Bailleul, mother of the late marshal d'Huxelles, had been the friend of M. de la Garde, with whom she kept a regular epistolary correspondence during several years, which turned wholly on the news of the court and the town.

is no such thing as forgiveness, even for the bare misfortune of pleasing.

As to my health, I am perfectly well; my complaints have entirely left me, and I think the rheumatism has now taken its final leave of me. I no longer expose myself to the evening dews, and either employ my time at home, or take an airing on the hills in my carriage. The moon-light, it must be allowed, is a prodigious temptation; but I have hitherto withstood its allurements. In short, you may make yourself perfectly easy in regard both to my hands and knees. I shall have recourse to my ointment, and will take some of the good man's powder, as soon as the dog-days are over. It is true, I leave it entirely to you to manage me in whatever way you think fit, and really believe you will be of more service to me than five hundred doctors.

M. Charier tells me, that cardinal de Retz set out two days before his colleagues. I am no longer spoken to on this topic; I am too well known, and have had the honour to be treated like one of the d'Hacquevilles; but I can unriddle, for all that, what they would say to me, if they durst. I am sorry your cardinal * does not go the same road with the rest. For my part, I cannot get it out of my head, that our cardinal will do something very unexpected and extraordinary; either resign his hat on this occasion, or live a retired life, or be made pope; this last is attended with some difficulty: in short, I am of opinion that something will happen out of the common way. He has written me two lines from Lyons. There is reason to be uneasy about his health; and it will be a miracle if the heat, the journey, or the conclave, do not injure him in this respect.

* Jerome de Grimaldi, archbishop of Aix.

I was yesterday evening in the avenue which leads to this place, when I saw a coach and six advancing towards us, and who should it contain but the good marshal d'Etrées, the canon, the marchioness de Senneterre, whom the abbé de la Victoire calls the Mite, and the fat abbé de Pontcarré ! We had a great deal of chat, walked, supped, and at last my company set out by the light of my old friend the moon. Madame de Coulanges uses the bath ; Corbinelli has a complaint in his eyes; and madame de la Fayette has given over taking the air in her coach. For my own part, I employ myself in receiving and answering your letters; I read, I walk, I feed my imagination with the hopes of seeing you ; so that I am not an object of compassion. The abbé de la Vergne seems exceedingly zealous about your conversion : I think it not likely to happen soon; at least, if it is like madame de Schomberg's. Her merit, it must be acknowledged, is very much humanised, and she has always had abundance for those of her acquaintance ; this light, so long hid under a bushel, now enlightens the whole world ; she is not the only person on whom change of fortune has wrought miracles. We quarrel with honest d'Andilly, for being more zealous to save a soul lodged in a fair body, than any other. I say the same of the abbé de la Vergne, whose merit and reputation here are greatly increased; I think you very fortunate in having him. Does he leave Provence? and is he to return there again? Nothing can be more amusing than your vision of the turtle Sablière. She taught her mate the way to her heart. She purchased the bed which belonged to the deceased, for reasons that you will not be at a loss to guess.

The friend * of madame de Coulanges is still in high

* Madame de Maintenon.

favour. If our little friend * is really attached to that good country, it must be owing to the transitory pleasure she receives in it; it is impossible she should be weak enough to be the dupe of that show of friendship and affection they take so much pains to lavish on her. I know nothing of madame de Monaco. Every thing at the hotel de Grammont is hid under the impenetrable discretion of d'Hacqueville; and, for all that, every thing is exactly on the same footing as it was at the hotel de Grancey, except the meagreness and languor of the prince, which savours so strongly of La Brinvilliers. The abbé de Grignan will inform you of what relates to Penautier; I lose a thousand articles of intelligence by being here. M. de Coulanges sets out for Lyons with madame de Villars. I think, when he is once there, he ought to be under your government. You may at least be perfectly easy with regard to his management; you could not possibly have a better pilot. The good abbé has the most perfect regard and friendship for you; he frequently drinks your health; and when the wine is good, expatiates greatly in your praise, and tells me I do not love you sufficiently. Adieu, my dearest; I am in no apprehension of such a reproach before God.

My preceptors in philosophy † have been somewhat neglectful of me. La Mousse is gone to Poictou with madame de Sanzei ‡. The father-prior (of Livri) would be glad to be instructed too; it is pity so good an intention should be disappointed. We are reading in gloomy mood, the little treatise of the Passions (de Descartes), and we see how well the nerves of M. de

* Madame de Coulanges.

† Messieurs de la Mousse and Corbinelli.

‡ She was sister to M. de Coulanges.

Luxembourg's back have been disposed for a retreat. But do you know that all of a sudden they have left off speaking of Germany at Versailles? One fine morning, on some persons asking what news from Germany, out of mere concern for their country, they were answered, "Why inquire about news from Germany? there are no couriers from thence, none to come, none expected; to what purpose then ask for news?" And there it ended.

LETTER CCCCXLVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, August 21, 1676.

I CAME hither this morning to execute the commissions of M. de la Garde. I alighted at the house of the good d'Escars, whom I found in a bilious fever, but full of kindness and good-will. The mantua-maker, madame le Moine, was with her, and she was surrounded with the finest point, French and Spanish, in the world. I dined at M. de Meme's; and at three returned to madame d'Escars; on entering the court, I met madame de Vins and d'Hacqueville, who came very politely to see me. We selected a very beautiful gown and petticoat, some gold and silver stuff for a toilet, lace for the petticoat and for the toilet, with a great many other articles, all of which will be incomparably beautiful: but as I have ordered them all in my own name, and on very short credit, let me beg you not to leave me exposed to the uncertainty of the payment of M. de la Garde's pensions, but to send me a bill of exchange. M. Colbert is a little indisposed; were you to know the use that is made of this pretext, even with regard to your pension, you would easily be convinced, that no-

thing is equal to a bill of exchange; as for the poor courtiers, who are accustomed to patience, they will wait the happy moment at the royal treasury. The handsome abbé * is this moment coming in; he came to see me on Wednesday at Livri, we had a long conversation about your affairs. The coadjutor certainly ought never to be proposed †, but as a most proper and worthy person, without its even coming to light, that he has ever bestirred himself in the least about it; since he ought to appear to the world as fixed, and satisfied in every respect, with his present situation. We would only endeavour to make sure of the archbishop (of Arles); that is, to dispose him to receive such other person, for coadjutor, as might be proposed to him: and even this must be transacted merely by the confessor, it not being within M. de Pomponne's district, who, however, would certainly not fail to support it, if occasion offered. But it is believed here, that, notwithstanding the report that has been current, of M. de Mende's refusal of Alby, he will yet accept it; if this be true, all our conferences are in vain. As for the government, the son is to have the reversion of it, and *matame te Lutre* will be well enough satisfied with this acknowledgement, on her quitting the dress ‡ she has worn so long. We are also told that Theobon, whether she has merited this establishment or not, would be very glad to have it: so you see on what this affair turns. I love the handsome abbé for his great zeal in your affairs, and for calling so often to

* The abbé de Grignan, brother to the coadjutor of Arles.

† The business in question was the archbishopric of Alby, which was thought to be still vacant, from a report that M. de Mende had refused it.

‡ She was canoness of Poussai.

consult about them with me, who, by the bye, am far from being such a fool in this respect, I suppose from the interest I take in them, as I am in all other worldly matters.

We spent a very pleasant evening at Livri; and have this day come to a determination with the great d'Hacqueville, that all our solicitations are in vain for this time, but that we ought not, for all that, to lose so fair an occasion of presenting our request. Madame de Vins entreats me to return to-morrow, and to be at madame de Villars' between five and six, where she will meet me. We may possibly see M. de Pomponne in the evening, who will return from Pomponne, where madame de Vins could not go, on account of a law-suit, for she is never without one, which is always to be determined to-morrow. I must own I feel myself strongly tempted by her proposal; so that, to all appearance, I shall put off my departure till Sunday, when I propose to hear mass at Livri. They smell a rat at *Quanto's*, but no one can tell exactly where: the lady whom I mentioned to you has been named; but as the gentry of that country are esteemed deep politicians, it is possibly not there either. One thing, however, is past all doubt; the gentleman seems gay, cheerful, and quite himself; whilst the damsel appears sad, confused, and sometimes in tears. I will tell you more of this when I am able.

Madame de Maintenon is gone to Maintenon for three weeks. The king has sent Le Nôtre to embellish that beautifully ugly place. I have as yet seen nothing of the handsome madame de Coulanges, nor of Corbinelli. Marshal Schomberg's army is going to succour Maestricht; though every body thinks the enemy will not wait his coming, either because the place is already

taken, or that the siege has been raised; they are, it seems, not strong enough. My dear, amiable child, adieu.

LETTER CCCCXLIX.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Wednesday, August 26, 1676.

I FANCY you discover that I answer both your letters on Wednesdays; on Fridays, I live at the public charge, or at least on my own stock; that is, I contrive to write, now and then, a very poor epistle. I am now expecting your last letter, and yet am going to attempt to answer your other, as well as to inform you of my proceedings for several days past. I wrote to you on Friday, the abbé de Grignan being then at my elbow; I told you madame de Vins and d'Hacqueville had entreated me to go with them the next day to madame de Villars', where they said they would meet me. We spent two hours there very agreeably; I staid therefore purely out of my great love and regard for them. I had, before that, been at madame de la Fayette's, for I must clear my conscience. La Saint Geran showed us a very pretty letter, which you and M. de Grignan had jointly written; we admired your economy. After that, I went to mademoiselle de Meri's, and Sunday morning returned to this place, after having paid my respects, on the two evenings, to madame de Coulanges, and Corbinelli. The former uses the bath; she tells me she intends to come to me soon, the time must be left to her own discretion. You know the pleasure I take in executing your commands, and that I never value myself upon any trifling services: I am even charmed with being thought nothing of; a pleasure we are sure

to enjoy, if we live to be old. Corbinelli is willing to come down if I desire him to do so; and I am resolved I never will. In the mean while, the worthy marchioness d'Huxelles, whom I have loved so many years, desired I would not fail to return to partake of a dinner she was to give M. de la Rochefoucault, M. and madame de Coulanges, madame de la Fayette, &c. I thought I discovered, in her manner and voice, what was sufficient to determine me to undergo the fatigue. This entertainment happened to be on the Monday, so that, though I came back on Sunday, I returned Monday morning to the marchioness's from this place. She gave this dinner at her neighbour Longueil's *. The house is really very pretty; nothing could exceed the order and regularity of the servants; so that this change gave great satisfaction. When the company came, I had been there some time, scolding at their being so late. Instead of M. and madame Coulanges, who could not be there, we had Briole, the abbé de Quincé, and mademoiselle de la Rochefoucault. The repast, the conversation, every thing deserved the highest encomiums: we broke up late. I returned to madame d'Escars', that I might a second time admire the beauty of the lace and stuffs; every thing will be very handsome. From thence I went to madame de Coulanges's; and was scolded for having thought of returning. They would detain me, they knew not why, and I returned on Thursday morning, which was yesterday, and had taken a turn in the garden, before the folks at Paris had the least thought about me.

* The same, no doubt, who, at the beginning of the Fronde, agitated the parliament, of which he was a member. He was brother of the president de Maisons, who built the beautiful seat which is called by his name, by means of a treasure which was found in his house at Paris, concealed there from the reign of Charles IX.

The troubles in Germany have shifted the scene and passed into Flanders. The army of marshal Schomberg is on its march, and will be, on the twenty-ninth, in a situation to relieve Maestricht. But what afflicts us as good Frenchwomen, and, at the same time, consoles us as being interested in the affair, is, that it is generally believed, they will come too late, let them use what diligence they may. Calvo has not men sufficient to relieve the guard: the enemy will make a last effort, and the more so, as it is believed, beyond all doubt, that Villa Hermosa* has entered the lines, and is to join the prince of Orange, in order to give a general assault: this is the hope I found at Paris, and of which I have told you as much as it was possible for me to do, that I might compose myself for taking M. de Lorme's powders, as we are now got out of these dog-days, which it seems have made the usual demands; can this be what they call the dog-days? The little queens of Paris say, that Marphorio asks Pasquin, how it happens that Philipsburg and Maestricht should both be taken in one year; and that Pasquin answers, that it is because M. du Turenne is at St. Denis, and the prince at Chantilli.

Corbinelli will answer your questions, with regard to the size of the moon, and the causes of the sensations of bitter and sweet. He has convinced me as to the dimensions of the moon; but I do not understand the sensations of the palate quite so well. He says, whatever does not seem sweet to us is bitter: I know there are no such things as sweet and bitter; but I make use of the expression, by which we call things abusively or improperly sweet and bitter, that I may make my-

* Governor of the Spanish Netherlands, and general of the forces of that crown.

self understood by the ignorant and the vulgar. He has promised to enlighten me, upon this subject, when he comes. Nothing can be better than what you tell him in order to prevent my going out during the damps of the evening: I assure you, my child, I never venture abroad at that time; the very thought of contributing to your satisfaction, would be sufficient to work this miracle: besides, I have a mortal apprehension of relapsing again into my rheumatism. I resist the charms of that seducing enchantress, the moon, with a constancy and firmness worthy the highest panegyric: after such an effort as this, who will pretend to doubt my virtue, or, to speak with more propriety, my timidity? I have seen madame de Schomberg; she loves and esteems you as it were in anticipation, so that you will find the ice already broken. The abbé de la Vergne writes to her of you in high terms of praise, and she has spoken to me, in the same favourable manner, of him; there is not a person in the world for whom she has so great a regard; in short, he is her father, her best and truest friend; she relates a thousand good things of him, and it is an endless subject when once she gets upon it. She sees plainly that he respects you, and is desirous of acquiring your esteem; he has exquisite taste: she is sure you must like his ease and sweetness of temper, and thinks he has an undoubted right to make a convert of you, since you are persuaded that what he proposes is for your good. Had she been equally persuaded of the expediency of what he intended for herself, the business had been as good as done. You see, by our conversation, we do not reckon much on what comes from above. I desire you will talk to me of this abbé, and let me know how long you have had him with you.

It is imagined *Quanto* is wholly reinstated in her fe-

licity : it is for want of a subject of conversation, that we are told of so many revolutions. Madame de Maintenon continues still at Maintenon with Barillon and the *Tourte* *; she has desired some other persons to join her there, but the man, who, you once said, wished to set your mind upon the trot, and who is a deserter from that court, answered with great pleasantry, " that, at present, there was no lodging-room for friends; that what there was, was only fit for lacqueys." You see what an accusation is brought against this good head! and who is to be trusted after this? The favour in which she is, it must be allowed, is extreme, and it is certain that *Quanto's* friend speaks of her as of the principal, or at least as the second-best, friend he has in the world. He has sent her a famous architect (Le Nôtre), who is to improve her house admirably. It is said that the prince is to go there too; I suppose this was determined on yesterday at madame de Montespan's: they are to travel post, without sleeping there at all. I return you a thousand thanks for your excellent account of a reconciliation, in which I take so much interest, and which I desired exceedingly, both for the consolation of the father, and to say the truth, for the honour of the son, that I might be at liberty to esteem him thoroughly. If the spectators were of my opinion, I congratulate them on the pleasure they must have experienced.

Your letter is just arrived in time for me to finish this. The prospect you give me of removing the horrors of a separation, is delightful indeed; nothing can have happier consequences with respect to my health, than this hope. The best beginning will be, to arrive; you will find me quite a different creature from what you

* See the Letter of August 21.

expect; my poor knees, and the hands which have given you so much uneasiness, will certainly be perfectly cured by that time. In short, my present delicacy would be esteemed perfect vulgarity in another, so superabundantly was I provided with that noble quality, robust health. As for Vichi, I make not the least doubt of returning thither this summer. Veson told me to-day, he wished it were this instant; but de Lorme tells me, I ought to be very careful how I venture on such a step at this season: Bourdelot says plainly, it is certain death, and that I forget my rheumatism took its rise from extreme heat. I love to consult these grave folks, merely that I may have the pleasure of laughing at them; can any thing be more ridiculous than this contrariety of opinions? The Jesuits were certainly in the right in advancing, that there were grave authors who maintained every probable opinion: you see then I am at liberty to follow that I like best. My handsome physician of Chelles is now with me: I assure you he knows full as much, perhaps more, than any of them. I know you will rail at this encomium; but could you see how much care he has taken of me for these two or three days, and how finely he has checked the beginning of a disorder I thought I had entirely got rid of, and which I renewed at Paris, you could not help loving him exceedingly. In a word, I am perfectly recovered, and am under no necessity at all of being bled; I shall adhere strictly to his prescriptions, and afterwards take some of my old good man's powders. He thinks, from my present habit of body, that I shall not entirely be free from these returns for these three years. They wanted to keep me at Paris; if I had not walked a great deal, I should not have been so well as I am. I

conjure you, my child, to make yourself perfectly easy upon my account, and to think of affording me realities, after having fed me so long with flattering hopes only.

I received a note from our cardinal at Lyons, and afterwards one from him at Turin. He tells me his health is much better than he could have expected, after so much fatigue. He seems so well pleased with M. de Villars, that he is gone to visit him at his villa. You know they are not to see the duke (of Savoy), as they are to put him on a footing with the other Italian princes, to whom they never give the lead; and that duke is determined to behave exactly in the same manner with the prince; that is to say, every one is to do the honours after the manner of his own country. Do you not admire the rank and quality of those cardinals? I am astonished ours has not written to you from Lyons; it was so natural.

Pray think seriously about the ill growth of your son; it is of sufficient importance to induce you to have a consultation. Things go on perfectly to our wishes with the coadjutor: but if there is a place in the universe to recover him after his fatigue, it is certainly in this country. As for that German, I am well informed that the abbé de Grignan has no thoughts of equipping him till your return; this would not be worth the trouble it would cost, after waiting so very long. What has happened to you is really a little miracle; your embarrassment made us smile, to think you could not find out whether he is master of the delicacies of the German language, or whether you confound the Swiss with it. We think you will never be able to attain this nicety: you will undoubtedly confound the one with the other, and think the *pigeon* talks like a Swiss instead of speaking German. You divert us so

much about Flanders and Germany, that with respect to the tranquillity of the one, and the confusion that prevails in the other, all we are able to say, is, Let each take its turn. Farewell, my dear and lovely child, I admire your pretty excuses about your saying so much of your son; I may ask your pardon, with equal justice, for talking to you so much about mine. The baron writes me word, that he thinks they shall not be able to reach the end of their journey in time, let them make what haste they will; I pray God what he says may prove true; I ask my country's pardon for saying so. You tell me nothing of the *said deponent* *; it is an infallible proof he has nothing more to say; will he never pronounce the long wished for *yes?* it is a beautiful word. I beseech him always to love me a little.

LETTER CCCCL.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Friday, August 28, 1676.

I ASK my dear country's pardon for it, but I sincerely wish M. de Schomberg may never be able to come to action; his cool blood, and his manner so different from M. de Luxembourg's, make me apprehensive of consequences, as different as their characters. I have this moment been writing a note to madame de Schomberg, to know what news there is from him. I discovered this lady's high and transcendent merit a long time ago; and I do not find it lessened since she has become a general's lady. She loves Corbinelli passionately; her mind had never turned to any kind of science, so that

* M. de la Garde.

the novelty she finds in this conversation, will increase the charm of it. They say madame de Coulanges will come here to-morrow with him: I shall be heartily glad of it, since it is to their love for me I shall owe this visit. I have desired d'Hacqueville to inform me of what I want to know respecting M. de Pomponne; and have written, for the twentieth time, I believe, to that little stammerer de Parere. I am sure he will give you just the answer he will write to me, and will besides tell you, that M. de Mende has accepted the bishopric of Alby, notwithstanding the reports that have prevailed to the contrary. I am, moreover, reading the emblems of the holy Scriptures *, which begin from Adam. I have begun with the creation of the world, which you are so fond of, and shall end with the death of our Saviour, which you know is an admirable series. We find in it every circumstance, though related concisely; the style is fine; it is done by an eminent hand: the history is interspersed throughout with excellent reflections, taken from the fathers, and is very entertaining. For my own part, I go much further than the Jesuits; and when I see the reproaches of ingratitude, and the dreadful punishments with which God afflicted his people, I cannot help concluding, that we, who are freed from the yoke to which they were subjected, are, in consequence, highly culpable, and justly deserve those scourges of fire and water, which the Almighty employs when he thinks fit. The Jesuits do not say enough on this subject, and others give cause to murmur against the justice of the Deity, in weakening the supports of our spiritual liberty, as they do.

* History of the Old and New Testament, by M. de Saci, sieur de Royaumont. He composed this book in the Bastile. It is, they say, filled with allusions to the vicissitudes of Jansenism in that age. M. de Saci was president of the nuns at Port-Royal.

You see what fruit I derive from my reading. I fancy my confessor will enjoin me to read the philosophy of Descartes.

I suppose madame de Rochebonne is now with you, and I present my respects to her. Is she glad to find herself in the house of her forefathers? Do they at the chapter * pay their respects to her as they ought? Is she delighted with the sight of her nephews? And is it true that Paulina † goes by the name of mademoiselle de Mazargues? I should be angry with myself if wanting in the respect due to her condition. And pray, is the little eight months' child likely to live a century? I am so often at Grignan, that I sometimes fancy you must see me amongst you. Oh! how charming would it be, could we transport ourselves in an instant, to the places where we are present in imagination! Here comes my handsome physician ‡, who finds me in excellent health, and is proud of my having obeyed his orders for two or three days. The weather is cool, which might determine me to take my good man's powders: I will let you know on Wednesday. I hope those who are at Paris, have sent you all the news; I know none, as you see; my letter savours of the solitude of this forest, but it is a solitude in which you are perfectly adored.

* The collegiate church of Grignan.

† Paulina Adhemar de Monteil de Grignan, grand-daughter of madame de Sévigné, who was then three years old. She married, in 1695, Louis de Semiane, marquis d'Esparron, the king's lieutenant-general in Provence after the death of M. de Grignan his father-in-law.

‡ Amonio.

LETTER CCCCLI.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Wednesday, Sept. 2, 1676.

M. D'HACQUEVILLE and madame de Vins have slept here; they came, like good creatures as they were, to see us yesterday; they are excellent companions; you know how well we all agree together. Brancas is come too, to dream a while with his sylph *. He and I, however, had a long talk about you; we admired your conduct, and the honour you have done him †. But what we all admired, was the good fortune of the king, who, notwithstanding the ineffectual, but too necessary measures M. de Schomberg was obliged to follow in his march, for the relief of Maestricht, is informed that the mere approach of his troops has raised the siege. The enemy did not dare to risk an engagement: the prince of Orange, who was sorry to abandon an enterprise that had given him so much trouble, was for venturing all; but Villa Hermosa thought he ought not to hazard his troops, so that they have not only raised the siege, but even abandoned their ammunition and their cannon; in short, there is every mark of a precipitate retreat. It is the most fortunate thing in the world to have to do with confederate forces, for we reap every sort of advantage from them; but the surest way is, to wish for whatever the king wishes; and then we are sure to have our wishes fulfilled. I was in great uneasiness; I had sent to madame de Schomberg's, to ma

* Madame de Coulanges.

† The count de Brancas had been the negotiator of the marriage between mademoiselle de Sévigné and M. de Grignan.

dame de St. Geran's, to d'Hacqueville's, when I was informed of all these miracles. The king was not free from apprehension any more than we were. M. de Louvois made the utmost haste to acquaint his majesty with the news of this good fortune; the abbé de Calvo was with him; the king embraced him in transports of joy, and gave him an abbey worth twelve hundred livres a year, a pension of twenty thousand livres, with the government of Aire to his brother, and a world of praises, of more value than all the rest. In this manner has the mighty siege of Maestricht been raised, and Pasquin proves to be a mere blockhead.

Young Nangis is to marry little Rochefort; a very sad match. The maréchale is still very much afflicted, in very ill health, and very much altered; she has eaten no meat since the death of her husband; I shall try to persuade her to continue this abstinence *. I have much talk with the good d'Hacqueville and madame de Vins, who seems to have the greatest friendship for you imaginable; this, you will say, is no news; but it is always agreeable to learn that distance makes no alteration in the minds of our friends. We anticipate the pleasure of seeing you next month: for it is now September, and we know the next to that is October. I have taken some of my good man's powder; this grand remedy, which frightens all the world, is a trifle to me, and really works miracles on me. I had my handsome physician with me, which was no small comfort; he never spoke but in Italian, and told me a thousand diverting stories during the operation. It is he who advised my dipping my hands in the wine-tubs in the vintage; after that to use the stomach of an ox;

* This is a mere jest, which turns upon madame de Grignan's wishing, for the honour of her sex, that grief should be lively and lasting.

and lastly, if there be occasion for it, the marrow of a deer, with Hungary-water. In short, I am determined not to wait till the return of winter; I am resolved to be cured, and well, before the fine season is entirely over. You see I am very careful of my health, and as I consider it as belonging to you, I do not see how I can do otherwise.

MADAME DE COULANGES CONTINUES.

Be ingenuous, madam, and tell me whether you do not allow that I have just cause of complaint against you. I wrote to you from Lyons, never from Paris, and I now write to you from Livri. What shows I am in the right, is, that you take all in very good part: had you done me the favour to have reproached me for it, I should have been rejoiced, as I should then have seemed of some consequence to the world; but it is beneath you to find fault with such a poor mortal as I am. We lead here a very quiet and harmless kind of life: I beg you would exhort madame de Sévigné to take care of her health; you know she refuses you nothing; she never goes out during the evening dews; her only comfort is, the hopes of seeing you here again: for my own part, I desire it with an eagerness to which I have no pretensions. You are so well informed already with respect to news, that I shall not take up your time, with giving you any. The king is so happy, that I cannot see how it is possible for him to form a wish to be more so. Adieu, madam, you are expected with an impatience you deserve; this I may say without even the suspicion of exaggerating. Barillon finds no society worthy of his attention, when you are in Provence, except the abbé de la Trappe's. But you

must lend an attentive ear to M. de Brancas, who is going to hold forth to you.

FROM M. DE BRANCAS.

It is impossible for me to be at Livri without thinking of mademoiselle de Sévigné, or without reflecting, that if I have laboured to make M. de Grignan happy *, it has been to my own cost, since I suffer as much as man can do, from your long absence. Madame de Coulanges would fain make us believe, that there are some persons in the world who have reason to regret it still more: I have no desire to enter into a detail of her arguments, and will rest satisfied with assuring you, that you ought to return as quickly as possible, if you love your mother, madame de Sévigné, who will certainly take no care of her health, till you have set her heart at ease. I have received, with pleasure and respect, your congratulations on the delivery of my daughter †. Believe me, madam, it is impossible to honour you more affectionately than I do.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ CONTINUES.

I am afraid madame de Coulanges will go to Lyons sooner than she thinks, or than she wishes; her mother is dying. I shall ask you soon, how you intend to travel to Lyons, and from thence to Paris. You know what you are to find at Briare.

You are perfectly right, to lay aside your apprehensions on account of Maestricht and Philipsburg: you

* See the note †, page 163.

† The princess d'Harcourt. See the Letter of August 11.

will be astonished to find how well every thing has gone, and how much to our wishes. I regret the evacuation of bile that took place when we were upon the eve of a battle. Your sentiments are all worthy of a Roman matron; you are besides the finest woman in France; you see your credit does not sink among us. Corbinelli has been here these two days; he came back in haste to see the grand-master, who is since returned from Alby. I have a notion Vardes * contrives to do very well without Corbinelli, but he is satisfied with his continuing here in quality of his resident. It is he who keeps up the peace between madame de Nicolaï † and her son-in-law; it is he who presides in all the projects formed for the little good lady ‡: nothing is done without Corbinelli; Corbinelli is the soul which moves all the springs of action. He spends, however, very little at Vardes, for he is virtuous, discreet, and philosophical. Besides, Corbinelli had rather be here, on account of his infirm state of health, than in Languedoc; this I take to be the grand secret of his long stay at Paris.

Madame de Soubise's vision has vanished more quickly than lightning; matters are now entirely made up. I told you that, the other day at play, *Quanto* leaned her head very familiarly on her friend's shoulder, as much as to say, "I am now happier than ever." Madame Maintenon is returned to her own habitation; it is impossible to express the high degree of favour she is in: it is said, M. de Luxembourg, by his late conduct, intended to put the finishing stroke to M. de Turenne's funeral panegyric. They praise M. de Schom-

* François-René du Bec, marquis de Vardes, banished into Languedoc, on account of some court-intrigues.

† Marie-Amelot, mother-in-law to M. de Vardes.

‡ Marie-Elizabeth du Bec, married in 1678 to Lewis de Rohan Chabot, duke de Rohan.

berg lavishly: they give him credit for a victory, supposing him to have fought a battle, so that he reaps the same honour almost as if he had really beaten the enemy. The good opinion of the public for this officer, is founded upon so many battles he has won, that we cannot help thinking he would have won this also, had he fought: the prince places no one on a level with him, in his esteem. With regard to my health, my dear child, it is as good as you could wish; and when Brancas told you I take no care of it, it is because he has wanted me to begin dipping my hands in the vintage ever since July; but I am certainly going to use all the cures I told you of, that I may be beforehand with the winter. I shall go for a moment to Paris to see M. de la Garde's casket. I have seen it in separate pieces, but I want to see the whole together. Adieu, my lovely; my company are extremely uneasy at my absence. I will, therefore, close this packet.

LETTER CCCCLII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, at madame d'Escars',
Friday, Sept. 4, 1676.

I DINED at Livri, and came here at two o'clock: and am now surrounded with all our fine dresses; the linen appears to me perfectly beautiful and well chosen: in short, I am satisfied with every article, and doubt not, but it will give you as much satisfaction as it has me: our stuffs have succeeded as well as heart could wish. To say the truth, they have cost me abundance of pains: I am exactly in the situation of Moliere's physician, who wipes his brow as if he had performed a miracle in restoring speech to a girl who had never been dumb.

Yet for all that, we cannot sufficiently thank the good d'Escars; she was really very ill, and yet took infinite pains in the execution of this commission: I could not think of letting so many fine things go, without first taking a parting glance at them. I am now writing to you, and without having seen a soul, return to Livri to sup with madame de Coulanges and the *worthy;* I shall be there at seven: can any thing be more charming than this proximity? I have just received a note from d'Hacqueville, who thinks me at Livri: he will needs have me go to Vichi; but I fear I should overheat myself, and besides, I have not the least occasion for such a journey. I am going to set about curing my hands with the greatest calmness imaginable, during this vintage; I take these marks of his friendship in extreme good part, as I certainly ought, but will not, for all that, implicitly obey him: I have grave characters not a few on my side of the question; and what is a more powerful argument with me still, I find myself in perfect health.

Quanto has not been once at the dramatical representations, nor at the card-tables more than once. This wants explaining. Every lady is a beauty; but this is the language of courtiers: the beauty of beauties, however, is gay, which is a good sign. Madame de Maintenon is returned; she promises madame de Coulanges to take a journey purely on her account; a prospect which I assure you is far from turning her brain, whatever it might produce in others: she expects her, with all the calmness in the world, at Livri: nothing can be more obliging than she is to me. Marshal d'Albert is dying. D'Hacqueville will inform you of the gazette news, and of the great quantity of cannon and ammunition we have taken.

The *mite* (madame de Senneterre) is without her

ring-dove, at least that of the finest wing. Do you not think she is a fool for her pains? is this a way to bring customers? M. de Marsillac is gone to Gourville and to Poictou; M. de Rochefoucault is going after them, though it is a jaunt of a month at the lowest computation. But, my dear, it is high time for you to begin talking of your own journey: are you not still disposed to set out on your part, as soon as your husband is willing on his? This forwardness is not only convenient to you, but inexpressibly satisfactory to me. I approve of your bathing extremely, it will prevent you from being pulverised; invigorate yourself therefore, and bring us as much good health as you possibly can.

LETTER CCCCLIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Tuesday evening, Sept. 8, 1676.

I SLEEP at Paris, my dear child. I came here this morning to dine with madame de Villars, and to take my leave of her; it is no longer a thing to jest about, she goes away in good earnest on Thursday; and though she is very desirous to hear the three pretty words you have to say to her, she will not wait for you. She will not even wait the disposal of the lieutenancy of Languedoc, though common report says, she has so great an interest in it. She is going in quest of her husband, and is to personate him at a foreign court. Madame de Saint Geran * seems overwhelmed with grief at this separation; she stays behind with no attendant, but her virtue, and no support, but her good

* Françoise-Madeleine-Claude de Warignies, countess of Saint Geran.

name. Half the world thinks it will not be difficult to comfort her; for my part, I think she regrets sincerely the loss of so sweet and so agreeable a companion: Madame de Villars orders me to make you a thousand compliments: I regret this family exceedingly. Madame de Coulanges was with me; she will return to Livri as soon as she has been at Châville, where she has business. I am not in the least uneasy at her stay at Livri, complaisance has no pretensions to any share in it; she is in raptures with the place, and is the most agreeable companion in the universe. You may well imagine we pass but few dull moments. Corbinelli is often with us; so are Brancas and Coulanges, besides a world of comers and goers. Whom should we meet the other day at the end of the little bridge, but the abbé de Grignan and the abbé de St. Lac! I return to my forest to-morrow morning early. Corbinelli thinks my little physician a very great adept: the good man's powders have done me much good; I am going to take a small pill every morning for some days, in order to remove the serosities which gathered last year in my poor body, for which they are a sovereign specific: afterwards I shall bathe my hands in the vintage, without intermission, till they are perfectly cured, or till they tell me they are resolved never to be cured. In other respects, I am in perfect health, and my excursions to Paris are rather an amusement than a fatigue to me. I take care never to expose myself to the night dews; and as for her ladyship, the moon, I shut my eyes as often as I pass by the garden, in order to exclude the temptation *del demonio* (of the demon). In a word, you have thoroughly convinced me that my health is one of your chief concerns; this thought makes me particularly careful to manage it as a thing you hold dear, and for which I am responsible to you:

you may be assured I shall give you a very good account of it. My son informs me that the brothers de Ripert have performed prodigies of valour in the defence of Maestricht; I congratulate the dean, as well as M. de Ripert, upon this occasion.

Wednesday morning.

I have not slept well, but I am in good health, and am returning to my forest in the hope and impatience of seeing you; these are the two standing topics, you know, of my letters, or rather, of my reveries; for I am sensible I ought to keep this in a great measure to myself, and not trouble others with the subject of my musings.

LETTER CCCCLIV.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Friday, Sept. 11, 1676.

You are extremely witty, on the subject of our coadjutor. It seems you have resumed the liberties we took the year I was at Grignan; how we roasted him on the stories M. de Grignan told, that the coadjutor might go boldly any where without fear of the gabelle! I do not think there ever was a person of a happier turn for raillery than he is, not even M. de V***, who, if we may believe madame Cornuel †, has placed a good porter at his door; that is, given his wife a sad disorder. The other day a very decrepit frightful old woman presented herself before the king at dinner. The prince pushed her back, and asked her what she wanted: "Sir," said she, "I would fain have prayed his ma-

† Madame Cornuel was famous for her bon-mots.

jesty to have obtained leave for me to speak with M. de Louvois." The king said to her, "Apply to M. de Rheims; he can do it much better than I can *." Every one present was delighted with this answer. Nanteuil †, on the other hand, begged his majesty would be pleased to command M. de Calvo to sit for his picture. He is forming a cabinet, in which it seems he intends to give him a place. Every thing you foresaw with respect to Maestricht, has happened like the accomplishment of a prophecy. The king gave M. de Roquelaure yesterday the government of Guyenne: this is long expectation well recompensed at last.

It is the general opinion that *Quanto's* star begins to wane. There is nothing now but tears, vexations, disappointments, and affected gaiety; in short, my child, every thing has an end. Every one is now upon the watch, observing, conjecturing, divining; and faces are thought to shine like stars of the first magnitude, that, but a month ago, were deemed unworthy to be compared with some others: but the cards go merrily on, whilst the fair one confines herself to her own apartment. Some tremble with fear, others laugh; some wish the continuance of things on their present footing, others long for a new scene; in short, this is a crisis worthy of attention; at least if we may give credit to those who affect to be the deepest in the secret. Little Rochefort ‡ is to be married immediately to her cousin de Nangis; she is twelve years old. If she has a child soon, the chancellor's lady may say, "Daughter, go tell your daughter, that her daughter's daughter is cry-

* There is another account of this anecdote. It is said, that it was to madame Dufrênoi, the minister's mistress, that the king sent this old woman; which was more humorous, though less delicate.

† Famous for portraits in pastel, and a celebrated engraver.

‡ She was great-grand-daughter of the chancellor de Seguier's lady.

ing." Madame de Rochefort * has taken refuge in a convent while this match is making, and appears still inconsolable.

You know I returned here on Wednesday morning: I am delighted to be alone; I walk out, I amuse myself with reading and work, and I go to church; in short, I ask pardon of the company I expect, but I own, I do wondrous well without them. My abbé remained at Paris, that he might talk to your abbé, and desire him to give M. Colbert the letter M. de Grignan wrote him before he set out. Had the abbé Têtu been here, I should have been glad of his company in the absence of the abbé de Grignan, but he, it seems, is in Touraine: it is true, he likes there should be neither master nor companion in the families he honours with his friendship. Yet can you think it possible he should have one or other at our little friend's †? I tell him every day, that his regard for her must needs be very great, since he makes her *swallow snakes* both summer and winter; for, in my opinion, the dog-days are as disagreeable as the carnival: thus, the whole year is but one continued penance. They pretend to say that the *friend's friend* ‡ is no longer what she has been; so that we must not calculate upon a strong head, since it could not support the hurricane of this good country. Yours is a wonderful one indeed to endure your north-east winds with so much patience, and even good humour. When you are in good spirits, which I can easily discover by your letters, I share your cheerfulness: you are apprehensive you sometimes say silly things to me; good heavens! it is I who should make that com-

* Madeleine de Laval-Bois-Dauphin, widow of marshal de Rochefort, who died 22d May, 1676.

† Madame de Coulanges. ‡ Madame de Maintenon.

plaint, who am constantly committing the fault, and who ought to blush at it, when I think how much my years surpass yours, and how much younger I am in understanding. It is true, I should never have suspected you of calling La Garde *your ace of hearts;* it was a charming fancy; but it almost kills me to think that, after all, it may be a sort of presage of his being soon called by that pleasing title, *bon jeu, bon argent.* I hope you will acquaint me with all the particulars of that long-expected wedding. I am astonished he should have retained this whim so long in his head: it is a strange prospect for one, who could have done so well without it. When you mention any follies of this kind, I fancy you are thinking of me. We laughed very heartily at Grignan. You give me an excellent picture of La Vergne; I long to see him; I have scarcely ever heard so many praises of one man. Did I inform you that Penautier takes the air sometimes in his prison? He sees all his relations and friends, and passes his time in wondering at the injustice of the world: we wonder at it as much as he can do.

Madame de Coulanges informs me, she is grieved that she cannot return for these four or five days; that she is obliged to go about an intendancy, which she hears is vacant; that she is to wait on the king, and what is worse, on M. Colbert; I advised her to desire the king, as the old woman did, to procure her an audience of M. Colbert; I told her, at the same time, to make use of her eyes and ears, when she is in that part of the world, and to be sure not to lose the use of her tongue, when she comes here. She informs me, as the rest do, that madame de Soubise is set out for Lorges; this journey does great honour to her virtue. It is said there has been a thorough reconciliation, perhaps too good a one. Marshal d'Albert has left madame de

Rohan a hundred thousand livres, this methinks savours strongly of restitution. My son tells me, that the enemy were for a considerable while very near us; that on M. de Schomberg's approach, they retired; that on his nearer approach they retired still farther: in short, that they are now at the distance of six leagues, and will be soon at the distance of twelve; never was there so good-natured an enemy, *I love them dearly;* a pretty way of abusing words truly; for I have no other way of telling you I love you, but that I make use of for the allies.

LETTER CCCCLV.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Wednesday, Sept. 16, 1676.

What are you thinking of, my dear child, or what can you imagine, by saying you are uneasy at my taking my honest man's powders? They have really been of infinite service to me; and in four hours after I have taken them, I feel no inconvenience from them. This dreadful remedy, which has so terrified the rest of the world, is grown so tame and so gentle with me, and we have become so well acquainted in Britany, that we are continually exchanging new proofs of mutual confidence and esteem; the powder by its good effects, and I by words; but all is founded on gratitude. Be not uneasy respecting my stay at Livri; I find myself in perfect health; I live as I like, walk a great deal, read, have no sort of employment, and without setting up for one who loves to be an idler, nobody can possibly be fonder of the *far niente* (doing nothing) of the Italians than I am. I should never have been prevailed upon to quit this place for Paris, were it not for reasons which seem

to me superior to inclination : and could I dispense with these without remorse I should travel as slowly as madame de la Fayette herself. I never expose myself to the evening air, and suffer madame de Coulanges to walk by herself; Corbinelli stays at home very cheerfully to entertain me ; for you must know he is much more delicate than I am. Amonio makes me take a pill that is highly recommended, and a decoction of betony, every morning ; it clears the head delightfully, and is the very thing I wanted : I shall continue it for a week, and then for the vintage. In short, I think of nothing but my health : this is what is called eating sugar with sweetmeats. Pray, therefore, be not uneasy upon my account, and think only of administering the sovereign, and indeed the last, remedy you promised me, your delightful company. Every body is dying at the Rocks, and at Vitri, of a dysentery and purple fever. Two of my workmen have lost their lives by it ; I trembled for Pilois : the millers, the farmers, every body, has been attacked by these dreadful disorders. As you are above the wind, I hope you will escape these thick fogs; we are all well here ; your notion of this place is not a just one. La Mousse is at Poitou, with madame de Sanzei. It is true, he and Corbinelli are too much alike to amuse the spectators. Corbinelli thinks you as great a philosopher as father Malebranche himself: you may humble yourself as you please, you will be exalted in spite of yourself. I am now reading the little marquis's book ; I have likewise M. d'Andilli's, which is admirable, the English Schism *, which amuses me highly ; and more than all these, the furious attacks upon each

* This is the work of the Jesuit Sanderus, translated by Maucroix; a work full of partiality and fanaticism, which has been substantially refuted by Burnet. Neither the work nor the refutation are read, since this history has been written by philosophers.

other, of father Bouhours and Ménage *, who tear one another's eyes out, to our great amusement. They not only rail at one another, but in the most abusive language: there are likewise some excellent remarks on the French language; you cannot imagine what entertainment this controversy affords us; I wonder the Jesuit should give himself such liberties as he does, since he has *our brethren* (de Port-Royal) among his hearers, who will all on a sudden relieve him from his post, and that at a time when he least thinks of it; the laugh seems to be chiefly against him. The father prior is an excellent companion, on such occasions. Ah, my child, how much you would have profited by father Bossu †, who was here yesterday! he is the most learned man of his age, and a consummate Jansenist ‡, that is to say, Cartesian; he was pleased to lower his tone, however, on certain topics. I took great pleasure in hearing him talk; the prior led him out very pleasantly; but I thought continually of you, and could not help considering myself as a person unworthy of a conversation by which you must have profited so much, and in which you would so admirably have sustained your part. Corbinelli worships this father, and has been to visit him at Sainte Genevieve; when he comes here again, I must contrive for them to meet. Madame de Coulanges is still at Versailles; the *worthy* is at Paris; I

* Thus Bouhours, who had been the first to attack, was the first to demand peace. Ménage relates, that in the visit he paid the jesuit after their reconciliation, he accosted him with this phrase from Petronius, "The wound was deep, but it has left no scar." He added ingenuously; "Since we are friends, I find no more faults in his works."

† René le Bossu, regular canon of Genevieve, author of an excellent treatise on epic poetry.

‡ This conformity between the terms Jansenist and Cartesian, relates to the arrêt of Despreaux in support of Aristotle's doctrine against reason. See this arrêt in Despreaux's works.

am alone here, and yet I am not alone, which vexes me: for I had rather be left quite to myself. M. and madame de Mêmes are here; M. de Richelieu, madame de Toli, and a little girl who sings, came to dine with them the day before yesterday; I went there after dinner; we read a minute account of the siege of Maestricht, which is indeed a very pretty affair; the brothers de Ripert are taken notice of in a very handsome manner. Madame de Soubise has gone away in no small pet, lest the very shadow of her spindle should give offence; a great culverin was fired when it was least expected, that alarmed the camp. I will tell you more of this, after I have seen the *sylph*.

Amonio gives me leave to stay here some time longer; the weather is yet too fine to drive me away, and I am going to set about curing my hands. I never say a word of Italian to him, and he never speaks a word of French to me; this pleases us both. There is great intriguing at Chelles upon his account. I fear he will never grow old there: it is a little insurrection. Madame supports him, the young nuns hate him, the old ones like him, the confessors are envious of him, the visitor finds fault with his face: I could say a great deal of nonsense upon this subject.

But let us talk of Philipsburg; people now begin to think it will not be taken: it is only blockaded. The enemy's troops have decamped, in order to present their humble request to M. de Luxembourg to retire from Brisgaw *, Am I right? a province is now laying waste, and which the emperor values more than the conquest of Philipsburg. The king is fortunate in every thing; and if I am apprehensive for my son, it is because pri-

* A country in Germany, situated between the Rhine and the Black Forest.

vate persons often suffer in public victories ; but I neither am, nor ever can be, in any sort of apprehension for the vessel of the state. I am much more uneasy about that which brings our cardinal's luggage, whose ill luck never fails to shipwreck every thing: you have a stamp of it in your fortune, as well as a quarter in your arms. But I think too much and too often of your affairs : I adore the archbishop for the trouble he takes about them ; for still this is something; did no one attend to its safety, what would become of your bark ? it is I who must be then at the helm. I sincerely wish Mazarques were sold, with the leave of mademoiselle de Mazarques. I shall see what the marquis de Livourne intends to do; it will be attended with no cost; and as to favours from his majesty, we ought always to expect when we know we deserve them, as M. de Grignan certainly does. Look at M. de Roquelaure; what an example of patience ! no courtier had greater cause of complaint than he had.

I would rather go to Provence to pay a visit to the archbishop, than to see your prior who cures all evils.

Ah, what a grudge I owe physicians ! what mummery is their art ! I heard an account yesterday of the *Malade Imaginaire*, which I have not seen ; the hero of the piece is entirely under the management of these gentlemen, whose prescriptions he follows with the most scrupulous exactness. Sixteen drops of elixir are ordered in thirteen spoons-full of water ; should there be fourteen, he thinks it would destroy him. He takes a pill, and is told he must walk in his chamber ; but he is presently reduced to a dreadful and most embarrassing difficulty, having forgotten whether he is to walk the length of his room, or the breadth of it. I could not help laughing heartily at this ; and the same absurdities occur continually.

I am extremely anxious to hear of the arrival of the casket, and how you like it: how is it that this same marriage seems still so distant? God forgive me, but it appears very much like La Brinvilliers, who was eight months killing her father. Good heavens! burn this letter immediately; my compliments and respects to all the Grignans, and to our friends at Aix. I oblige Roquesante to appear ungrateful, by the great love and esteem I bear her.

LETTER CCCCLVI.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Friday, Sept. 18, 1676.

Poor madame de Coulanges is in a violent fever, attended with shiverings. She was seized at Versailles; to-morrow is the fourth day; she has been bled, and is no better: she is at a place where they will certainly take every drop of blood from her body, rather than not cure her. Her lungs are very much affected, and I am still more so: it is impossible for me to recollect all she writes me about her distress at not returning here, without being greatly moved. I intend to see her to-morrow; but I must be here again on Sunday, to begin my vintage. You shall have reason to be satisfied with me for devoting so much time to the cure of my hands. Corbinelli has sent me the letter you wrote him; it is really one of the prettiest compositions I ever read: I will certainly show it to father le Bossu *, for he is my Malebranche †; he will be charmed with

* See the Letter of 16th September.

† Nicholas Malebranche, priest of the oratory, author of the book called *Recherche de la Vérité*, and of several other works highly esteemed:

the good sense you discover in it; he will answer you if he is able; for he is not one of those who supply the want of arguments, with the chaff of words. I am sure you will like the simplicity and clearness of his understanding; he is the nephew of the M. de la Lane, who had the handsome wife. Cardinal de Retz has told you a thousand times of her divine beauty. He is nephew to the great abbé de la Lane, the Jansenist; the whole race inherit good sense, but he in an extraordinary manner; lastly, he is cousin to the little dancing La Lane. You see how I have entangled myself in particulars: all this was highly necessary no doubt.

The page of politics to Corbinelli is excellent: it may be understood without an interpreter; I shall therefore consult no one about it. Marshal Schomberg has attacked the rear-guard of the enemy; he must wholly have defeated them, had he pursued with a more numerous body of troops; a party of forty dragoons sacrificed their lives like so many heroes; one of the name of d'Aigremont was killed on the spot; Bussy's son, who wanted to get to paradise in haste, is a prisoner; the count de Vaux is always among the foremost; the rest of the army was wholly unemployed; so that five hundred horse made all this havoc. It is said, that it is a pity this detachment had not been stronger; but I see it happen every moment, that the wisest is often deceived. Even the *worthy* has sometimes been out in his calculations; he embraces you with his whole heart; and I think a thousand times a day of the pleasure I shall have in seeing you.

he was one of the best writers, as well as one of the greatest philosophers, of his time. See his eulogium by M. de Fontenelle: Hist. de l'Acad. des Sciences.

LETTER *CCCCLVII.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Livri, Sept. 18, 1676.

Every good dog comes from a good breed: you see, my dear cousin, what our little Rabutin is doing already. And so he is a prisoner. Is he not wounded? And how will you redeem him? Are the ransoms for officers of his rank fixed? By the way in which, I am informed, he pushed himself forwards, I suppose he was ambitious to take the enemy. I hope you will send me news of him, and of yourself, for I am much more interested about you than I say I am. How has the lawsuit terminated, of which the account, contrary to custom, was so entertaining? How is my niece de Coligny, and her little boy? He must be a great comfort to her, and this idea gives me pleasure, because I rejoice in her happiness. Is madame de Bussy as well as usual? Here are a number of questions for you. If you should be inclined to follow my example, and ask me as many, I will answer them beforehand. I am here, in this pretty place, which you are so well acquainted with; and much better, and more comfortable, it seems to me, than at Paris, at least, for a short time. I am using some remedies for the recovery of my health, and am putting my arms into the vintage tubs, hoping that my hands, which are not yet closed, will resume their ordinary functions. You ought to send me some scraps of your memoirs. I know persons who have seen a part of them, who do not love you so much as I do, though they may have greater merit.

LETTER *CCCCLVIII.

THE COUNT DE BUSSY TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, Sept. 18, 1676.

I HAVE heard, that the little Rabutin wished to take the prince of Orange by the beard; but that he was so astonished when he found him without any, that he fell into a ditch, where he was taken prisoner. I send you his letter, which will inform you exactly how this affair happened. His horse or his ransom will cost me a hundred pistoles. But he has obtained more honour than money is worth. He is very fortunate in being the only one who has been taken prisoner, at least of persons of consequence. I have been under a course of medicine for a fortnight, which has prevented me from coming to see you. I do not, however, abandon the idea, and I wish to sleep at Livri. Send me word if the abbé can give me a bed. I will bring the Memoirs and read them with you. I wish to know what passages particularly obtain your applause; and if you read them without me, you would only praise the work in general.

Your niece de Coligny, and the posthumous boy, are wonderfully well: she is pleased with him, and would not be displeased without him.

LETTER CCCCLIX.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

Livri, Monday, Sept. 21, 1676.

No, my dear child, it is not because I want to save you the disagreeableness of a journey in the month of

December, that I entreat you to come here in October; it is merely because I shall have the pleasure of seeing you two months sooner. I have not taken upon me to use the power you gave me over you, by ordering you to come here this summer: you must therefore make amends for this piece of complaisance, and if you do not mean to carry your irresolution beyond all bounds, you will set out exactly as was agreed upon between us, that is, when M. de Grignan goes to his assembly: this is the precise time from which I shall date my obligation to you, as I shall then consider you devoted to myself. My friendship tells me I ought to expect this from you, and now we will change the subject. As for my health, you need be under no sort of concern about it; I bathe my hands twice a day in the must of the vintage; my head is a little affected; but I am persuaded, from what every body tells me, that I shall be benefited by it. Should I be mistaken, Vichi will then come upon the carpet; in the mean while, I do every thing I am bid, and walk up and down and across my room, with the most scrupulous obedience imaginable. I shall not protract my stay here beyond the fine weather; I am under no sort of necessity to do so, and therefore will not promise to wait for the fogs of October. Did I tell you Segrais * has married a very rich cousin of his? She refused alliance with persons of equal wealth with herself, alleging that they would certainly despise her, and that she preferred her cousin.

I would gladly know why you forbid me to write you

* Jean Renaud de Segrais of the French academy.

Que Segrais dans l'Eglogue enchante les forêts!

How Segrais in his Eclogues charms the forests!

Notwithstanding this verse of Boileau, his Eclogues, like his translation of Virgil, have long been without readers.

long letters, since it is the most pleasing of all occupations, especially when I cannot have your company. You threaten me with returning them unopened. I should be exceedingly sorry to pay the postage; they are filled with such a multitude of trifles, that I am sometimes vexed to think, that even you should have to pay for them: but if you really desire to rid yourself of that mortification, come, come and see me, come and snatch the pen out of my hands, come and be my governess, and then upbraid me with the wretched things I have written you. This will be the best and the only way to prevent the swelling of my limbs, and, indeed, to restore me to the enjoyment of perfect health.

Philipsburgh is taken at last, and I wonder at it. I did not think our enemies knew how to take a town; I therefore asked, in the first place, who it was that had taken it, and whether it was not ourselves; but no, it is really they.

LETTER CCCCLX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, September 25, 1676, at madame de Coulanges's.

Indeed, my child, this poor little woman is very ill: this is the eleventh day of her illness, which seized her at Châville as she was returning from Versailles. Madame de Tellier was seized with it at the same time, and returned immediately to Paris, where she received the viaticum yesterday. Beaujeu, madame de Coulanges's waiting-maid, was struck by the same arrow: she has followed her mistress; not a medicine was prescribed for the one, that was not ordered, at the same time, for the other; purgatives, bleeding, the

sacrament, the paroxysms, the delirium, were exactly alike in both. God grant this fellowship may cease, for Beaujeu has just received extreme unction, and, it is thought, will hardly live till morning. We fear the return of the fit which madame de Coulanges may have to-morrow, as hers and her maid's have been so similar. This it must be owned is a dreadful disorder: I have witnessed the terrible bleedings the physicians prescribe to the poor creatures who happen to be afflicted with it; and as I am sensible that I have no veins, I declared yesterday to the first president of the court of aids, that if ever I am dangerously ill, I shall beg him to send M. Sanguin to me immediately; I am resolved on this. The very sight of those gentry is sufficient to deter us from putting our poor bodies in their power *. The death of Beaujeu is one of their back-handed exploits. I have thought of Moliere a hundred times since I became a witness of those scenes. I am not without hope, however, that our friend may escape, notwithstanding their vile treatment of her. She is calm at present, and in a sort of slumber, that will give her strength for what may happen during the night.

I have seen madame de Saint Geran, who is by no means low-spirited: her house will be a constant place of resort, where M. de Grignan will pass his evenings very lovingly. She is going to Versailles with the rest.

* It was not long that the circulation of the blood, proved, if not discovered, by Harvey, had changed the practice of medicine. It gave birth to several systems. "Hence this rage for bleeding, which the partisans of Botal believed themselves more authorised than before, to have recourse to in the treatment of diseases; a rage, which, though so often wearied with systematic murders, only reposed at intervals, and occasionally burst forth again in the schools." It is thus the eloquent and luminous historian of the Revolutions of Medicine expresses himself. This is the picture of the epocha in which madame de Sévigné wrote. Bleeding passed for a universal specific.

I can assure you she intends to enjoy the fruits of her economy, and to live on the credit of the reputation she has acquired; it will be a considerable time before she has exhausted her stock. She sends you a thousand compliments; she is very fat, and very well. You tell me wonders of the friendship of Roquesante; I am by no means surprised at it, knowing his heart so well as I do. He merits, for many reasons, the distinction you show him. I am quite well, and am overjoyed I had not begun the vintage; I shall use the other remedies; and when this poor little woman is recovered, I shall rest myself for a few days at Livri. Brancas came to-night on foot, on horseback, or in a cart; he fainted away at the side of the poor invalid's bed: no love can exceed his. That I entertain for you is far from being trivial.

I found at Paris an affair blown all over the town, which will appear extremely ridiculous to you; there are a thousand people who will tell you of it, but it seems as if you liked my accounts the best. There was a sort of agent of the king of Poland * at court, who was buying up all the finest estates for his master. At length, he fixed upon that of Rieux in Britany, for which he had signed a contract for five hundred thousand livres, requesting that this estate or manor might be erected into a duchy, and the name left blank. He took care to have all sorts of fine privileges and rights annexed to it, male and female, as suited his fancy. The king, and indeed every body else, thought it must be either for M. d'Arquien, or the marquis de Béthune. This agent at length presented to his majesty a letter from the king of Poland, naming the person it was for, guess who? Brisacier, son of the maitre des comptes. He

* John Sobieski.

had pushed himself into notice by a numerous retinue, and the most ridiculous expenses. The world simply took him for a fool, which is no rarity. But the king of Poland, by I do not know what divination, found out that Brisacier was originally from Poland; by which his name was lengthened by an additional *ski*, and himself became a Pole. The king of Poland adds, that Brisacier is his relation, and that formerly when in France, he was going to marry his sister. He has sent his mother a golden key; as lady of honour to the queen. Slander, by way of amusement, gave out that the king of Poland, also by way of amusement, had had some slight inclination for the mother, and that this boy was his son; but the affair is not so for all that; the chimera rests wholly on the good house of Poland. The little agent, however, has blown the whole affair, thinking the business he came upon as good as concluded; and the king, as soon as he was informed of the truth, treated this agent as an insolent fellow and a fool, and ordered him to leave Paris, giving him to understand, that, had it not been for his regard for the king of Poland, he would have him sent to the Bastile. His majesty has written to the king of Poland, complaining, in a friendly manner, of this intended profanation of the highest honour of the kingdom; and considers the protection the king of Poland is said to give this diminutive creature, as an imposition, and even calls in question the legality of the character with which he pretends to be invested. He leaves it to M. de Pomponne to enlarge upon this fertile subject. It is said this little agent has made off; so that the affair will probably sleep till the return of the courier.

LETTER CCCCLXI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, Sept. 30, 1676.

I AM telling a fib, it is only Tuesday: but I begin my letter in answer to yours, and that I may talk to you about madame de Coulanges, and shall finish it to-morrow, which will in reality be Wednesday.

It is now the fourteenth day of our friend's illness; the physicians will not as yet take upon them to promise any thing, because the fever still continues, and from her constant delirium, they have reason to be afraid of her losing her senses. However, as the returns are weaker, we hope all will still be well. They attempted to give her an emetic this morning, but found her reason so far gone, that it was impossible to prevail on her to take enough, to have the desired effect. It seems to me, as if you took pleasure in making yourself uneasy about my continuing in the feverish air of this house; I assure you I am as well, as you could wish me to be. M. de Coulanges is extremely desirous I should be here. I am sometimes in the chamber of the invalid, sometimes in the garden; I come and go when I please, I chat with a multitude of people; I walk out continually, so that I am in no danger of catching the fever: in short, my child, you need be under no uneasiness respecting me.

Poor Amonio is no longer at Chelles; he was obliged to yield to the visitor; Madame * is highly nettled at this affront, and in order to be revenged, has shut up all the avenues to her house; so that my sister de Bi-

* Marguerite-Guyonne de Cossé, abbess of Chelles.

ron, my sister de la Meilleraie, my nieces de Biron, my sister-in-law de Cossé, friends, cousins, neighbours, and every body else, are refused access. All the parlours are shut up, all the fish days are observed, the matins are sung without the misericorde ; a thousand little relaxations of discipline are reformed ; and when any complaint is made, " Alas ! I must keep to the rules." —" But you were not always so severe."—" I was wrong for not being so, I heartily repent it." In fact, we may call Amonio the reformer of Chelles. This trifle will no doubt amuse you ; and you may say what nonsense you please on the subject, I am persuaded of Madame's wisdom ; though it is this very circumstance that renders the affair utterly inconceivable. Amonio is with M. de Nevers ; he is dressed like a prince, and is the best creature in the world. He has sat up five or six nights with madame de Coulanges ; I assure you he is as great an adept as any of them, but his beard is not fit to appear in the presence of M. Brayer's. They have all told me that the vintage this year would certainly have done me harm, and that my being dissuaded from it, was a very fortunate circumstance. You will ask me, who recommended it to me ? I answer, Every body, and Vesou as well the rest; but he has thought better of it, and I am not sorry that he has done so.

Every one is of opinion that the lover's passion is at an end, and that *Quanto* is embarrassed between the consequences which might follow the return of favours, and the danger of discontinuing them, lest they should be sought after in some other quarter : on the other hand, it will be wrong to imagine friendship alone will content her ; so much beauty, and so much pride, are not easily reduced to the second place. Jealousy, it is true, is extremely quick-sighted ; but did you ever know that restless passion prevent any thing ? It is cer-

tain looks have passed between him and the *good** woman; but even granting all you have said to be perfectly just, she is still a different person, and that you know alters the case prodigiously. Many are of opinion she is too well advised, to display the standard of such perfidy, with so small an appearance of enjoying it long; she would then be directly exposed to the fury of *Quanto;* would open the way to infidelity, and would serve as a thoroughfare to others, who are younger, and more desirable; in the mean time every body is on the watch, and it is thought time will make some discoveries. The *good woman* has asked leave of absence for her husband; and since his return appears in her dress, and in all respects, as she used to do.

Did I tell you that the good marchioness d'Huxelles has the small pox? It is thought, however, she will get the better of this dreadful disorder, which is no small miracle at her age and mine.

It is now Wednesday evening. The poor patient is out of danger; unless some accident happens, which it is impossible to foresee. Beaujeu was actually gone, but the emetic raised her from the dead; it is not so easy to die as some people imagine.

* This is undoubtedly madame de Soubise, whose intrigue with the king was so secret, and conducted with so much art, that the penetrating malice of the courtiers and mistresses, could never do more than suspect it. (See the Œuvres de St. Simon.)

LETTER CCCCLXII.

FROM THE ABBÉ DE PONTCARRÉ TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, Oct. 2, 1676.

ACCORDING to my old and laudable custom, I came this morning into the apartment of the marchioness: the moment she saw my merry face, she guessed my intentions, and gave me this sheet of paper; but her generosity was not quite so great as it seemed to be, for she intends to make use of a part of it for herself, which I agree to willingly. I will therefore tell you *in poche parole* (in few words), my lady countess, that we are still in the dark as to the rest of the campaign. Will M. de Lorraine remain * for ever with folded arms? *Ecco il punto* (this is the point). We are also in qualms about M. de Zell's march towards the Moselle. M. de Schomberg must have passed the Sambre on the 27th, in his march towards Philipville: it will be easy for him to send reinforcements to M. de Crequi.

I suppose you know all the cabals of the conclave; if your friend should arrive at the sovereign eminence, methinks it would be no bad thing for you to take a trip to Rome, to offer him your service; you will have time enough, if it be true that the election is not to take place immediately. I passed part of yesterday at Richelieu's; I found the ladies entirely engrossed with deciding the important question of dress; I can only tell you that the *angel* will be most superb. I grumbled as usual, but received no other satisfaction than that of being treated as an old fool and a buffoon. I

* Prince Charles of Lorraine had just taken Philipsburg, after a siege of twenty-four days.

took all in good part, as I found myself not at all the worse for it. They wanted to talk to me about borrowing some jewels; but I did not encourage the idea, having always condemned such liberties. We are to have madame de Verneuil with us on Monday: she is coming to prepare for her journey into Languedoc. Manierosa is to accompany her, and to stay some days with us, after which she sets out for the Loire. I am, madam, with all due respect, wholly yours.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ CONTINUES.

You know the fat abbé, and how glad he is to save his paper; fortunately I am still better pleased, to furnish him with what he wants. He is at present sadly cast down at an accident that has happened to him: you must know he has given his valet a cloak, which he had worn only a year, thinking he had worn it two years: this mistake is grievous, and he is very sensible upon the subject: for my part, I think him as much an original in economy, as the abbé de la Victoire is in avarice.

Madame de Castres * sends me word that Odescalchi is pope; you must have known it before it could reach us. Our cardinals are now returning: should they come by way of Provence, you will see them before you set out. Do you know that little Amonio is travelling post to Rome? His uncle, not the one who attended the deceased pope †, is groom of the bedchamber to the new pope ‡. Thus his fortune is made,

* Elizabeth de Bonzi, sister to the cardinal of that name.

† Clement X.

‡ Odescalchi, elected pope the 21st September, took the name of Innocent XI.

and he will no longer stand in need of the favours of madame des Chelles, or any of her nuns. It is now Friday, my child, and I should by this time have been at Livri, as the weather is so delightfully fine, and madame de Coulanges out of danger, enjoying the pleasure of her recovery; but I wish first to know whether M. de Pomponne has concluded our affair this morning, that I may send you his letter this evening. I want likewise to thank him, and to speak to Parère; after which I shall be easy, and shall go to-morrow, or Sunday, to Livri.

Madame de Maintenon came yesterday to see madame de Coulanges; she expressed great concern at her sufferings, and was overjoyed at her recovery, or rather resurrection. The lovers were together all day yesterday. The wife came to Paris. They dined together: there was no card-playing in public. In short, joy is now returned, and every appearance of jealousy vanished. As there is nothing but changes in this world, from one extreme to another, the great woman is returned by water, and is now as well with the *beauty*, as she was formerly ill with her. Their rancour is softened; in short, what they say to-day, they unsay to-morrow: this is by no means the region of immutability. I conjure you, my beloved child, not to imitate these personages with regard to your journey, and to consider that we are now arrived at the 2d of October. As for my health, be under no concern about it: Livri, whatever you may think, will do me infinite service during the fine weather. Say nothing to T****, I beseech you; though I love him for his willingness to oblige you *in ogni modo* (in every way), by telling you he saw me; this little lie proceeded from a good motive. I assure you, my beauty, I never set my eyes on him, and did not so much as know of his being at Paris.

Langlade had like to have died at Frêne of the same complaint as madame de Coulanges, with this exception, that he was still worse than our friend, and had received extreme unction. Madame le Tellier will pay for all; she is extremely ill. Farewell, my dear countess: I embrace the count and the pretty *pigeons*. My God, how dear you all are to me! I entreat you to read father Bossu: he has composed a small treatise on the Art of Poetry, which Corbinelli rates a hundred times higher than that of Despréaux*.

LETTER CCCCLXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Wednesday, Oct. 7, 1676.

I WRITE to you now as it were *à l'avance*, as they say in Provence, to let you know that I returned hither on Sunday, in order to finish the fine weather, and rest myself after my fatigue. I find myself in excellent health, and the solitary life I lead, is far from being disagreeable to me, especially as I know it will not last long. I am going to try some little remedies for my hands, purely out of complaisance to you, for, to tell you the truth, I have no great faith in them; and it is always with the view to please you, that I take care of myself at all, being persuaded, that no human art can

* There seems to be no sort of comparison between the two works. The first, which is in prose, is a diffuse treatise on the epic poem in particular; and the other, which is in verse, comprehends the art of poetry in general, but in a very concise manner, and in imitation of Horace's Art of Poetry; so that father Le Bossu's work may be esteemed and praised with great justice, without, however, giving it the preference to the work of Despréaux, which is a master-piece of didactic poetry.

advance or retard the hour of my death for a single moment: yet for all that, I follow the plain maxims of what is called human prudence, believing, that by this, the eternal and immutable decrees of Providence are fulfilled. You may therefore conclude, my dear child, that no attention will be wanting on my part, as I hold this to be a necessary duty. This is a grave epistle: but I resume the sequel of my proceedings during my stay at Paris, which was nearly a fortnight. You know how I spent the Friday, and how I waited on M. de Pomponne. D'Hacqueville and I were of opinion that you had reason to be satisfied with the regulation that has been made, since the king wishes the lieutenant to be treated with the same honours as the governor: a very important point. On the Saturday, M. and madame de Pomponne, madame de Vins, d'Hacqueville, and the abbé de Feuquieres, came to take me with them on a jaunt to Conflans. The weather was extremely pleasant, and we found the house much improved since M. de Richelieu's time. There are six admirable fountains, which are supplied by machines from the river, and which will never be dry whilst the river has a drop of water in it. It is a pleasure to think of this supply of water, whether for bathing, or other purposes. M. de Pomponne was extremely cheerful and good-humoured; we had a great deal of conversation, and laughed the whole day from morning till night. With his natural sagacity, he found in every thing a *cathedral-like air* *. We were a very happy little party, and you may be assured, you were not forgotten.

The vision of the *good woman* vanishes perceptibly; though she is not of opinion that fear is the sole motive of attachment to *Quanto*. As for M. de Marsillac's

* This house belongs to the archbishops of Paris.

journey, I would not have you think it the effect of stratagem or finesse, it was very short, and he is now as well with the king as ever; he never once stopped for amusement, nor went a single step out of his way; he took Gourville with him, who has seldom much time to spare, and walked him round his estate like some great river, which enriches the soil wherever it flows. M. de Rochefoucault went, with the fondness of a child, to see Verteil once more, and the places where he used formerly to hunt with so much pleasure; I cannot say the scenes of his love, for I do not believe he ever knew what love meant. He returns with a slower pace than his son, and is going into Touraine to pay a visit to madame de Valentiné, and the abbé d'Effiat. He was extremely anxious about madame de Coulanges, who is now recovering from one of the most dangerous illnesses that it is possible to have endured. Neither the fever nor the fits have yet entirely left her; but as the crisis is past, and she is no longer subject to delirium, she may consider herself as being on the high road of convalescence. Madame de la Fayette is now at St. Mour. I have been there but once yet: she is still affected with the pain in her side, which has prevented her from seeing madame de Coulanges, about whom she was exceedingly uneasy: the same reason prevented her visiting Langlade, who was dangerously ill of the same complaint, and had received extreme unction, which was even a step beyond our friend. In short, she is now better in every respect, and that without stirring from the spot where she was first taken ill. I told madame de Coulanges the other day that Beaujeu had had extreme unction administered to her, and the Jesus Maria performed. She answered me with a voice, which sounded as if it came from the other world: "Ah! why did they not perform it for me? I am sure I de-

served it as much as she did." What say you to this strange kind of ambition? I would have you write to little Coulanges; he deserves compassion; had he lost his wife, he would really have lost his all. I could not help being affected at her causing a letter to be written to M. de Gué †, to recommend M. de Coulanges to him, and that from motives of justice and conviction, acknowledging that she had ruined him, and requesting this favour of M. and madame de Gué, as the last testimony of their friendship: she asked their pardon and blessing at the same time. I assure you it was a very melancholy scene. You will therefore write to this poor little man, who seems gratified at the marks of friendship I have showed his wife: in truth, it is on such occasions as these that we ought to show it.

Your little German is extremely clever in the estimation of the good abbé: he is as beautiful as an angel, and at the same time as modest and prudent as a young girl. He is going to repeat his German at M. de Strasbourg's. I have entreated him to render himself worthy of this honour: but I defy you to guess his name: to whatever you say, I may answer, "It is otherwise;" for "otherwise" *(Autrement)* is the name. Is it not calculated to excite in the mind a spirit of contradiction?

Madame Cornuel went the other day to visit B***, by whom she was very ill treated: she had to wait, till she could speak to him, in an anti-chamber full of servants. A civil sort of man came to her, and said that room was not a fit place for her: "Oh sir," said she, "I am very well here: I do not mind the servants, so long as they behave themselves as such." This made M. de Pomponne burst into one of his hearty laughs,

† Madame de Coulanges's father, who was intendant of Lyons.

which you have so often heard: I think you also will be highly amused at it.

The cardinal writes me word that he had created a pope on the day before, and assures me, that he had no scruple in doing so. You know in what manner he eluded the sacrilege of a false oath: the rest must have enjoyed it highly, since it was not even necessary. He tells me that his holiness is less a pope in title, than in his life and conversation; that he wrote to you from Lyons as he went, and shall not have it in his power to see you as he returns, on account of these same galleys, at which he is exceedingly vexed: so that he will soon be at home again, as if nothing had happened. This journey has done him great honour; for nothing can exceed the propriety of his conduct. It is even the general opinion, that by the excellent choice he has made of a sovereign pontiff, he has brought the Holy Spirit again into the conclave, after an exile of many years: after such an example as this, there is no exile who may not have hope.

So you are now in solitude: this is the time for you to be afraid of ghosts. I would wager, that there are not above a hundred persons in your house. I am quite of your opinion as to the amiableness of the beautiful Rochebonne: but Corbinelli's constancy is immersed in such a sea of philosophy, and is so attached to syllogisms and argument, that I can no longer answer for him. He says, that father Le Bossu does not reply properly to your questions; that it would be folly in him to pretend to instruct you, and that you know more of the matter than all of them: you will send us your opinion.

I think I told you the history of Brisacier *: it is

* This affair is related in detail in the Memoires de l'Abbé de Choisi.

impossible to say any thing farther of it till the return of the courier from Poland. He no longer appears, however, at Paris, or at court; he may be said properly to besiege the town, since he lives entirely among his friends in the environs. He was at Clichi the other day; madame du Plessis came from Frêne to condole with him on the breaking off of his bargain: Brisacier assured her it was not broken off, and that as soon as the courier returned, the world would see whether he was the fool they thought him or not. Whether it be the king or the queen of Poland, who is his protector, we shall judge of the affair as you do.

M. de Bussy came in while I was writing this letter: I showed him how mindful you were of him, he will tell you himself how much he is obliged to you. He read to me some of the most entertaining memoirs in the world: they are not to be printed, though I am sure they deserve it more than half the things that are published.

We have this moment heard that Brisacier and his mother, who were near Gagny, have been apprehended: this is a bad omen, if true, with respect to the affair of the dukedom. The news is perhaps rather too fresh, and possibly premature, at least in the way it is handed about at Paris. But d'Hacqueville will not fail to inform you of the particulars.

I have now, my child, yours of the 30th. Is it possible that you have not received mine of the 21st? it was filled with the finest exhortations imaginable; I decided the affair of your departure, and conjured you by your love, not to delay it a moment; this I now entreat you to do, for the same reasons: you will follow this advice, if you have the regard for me, I believe you to have; and in this persuasion, I shall wave saying again how much I desire it, and how much six weeks

must necessarily add to my impatience. Madame de Soubise is gone to Flanders to see her husband, who is ill; I approve of this exceedingly: see the *Holland Gazette*. I embrace you a thousand times, my dearest child, with an affection I cannot express.

LETTER CCCCLXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Friday, Oct. 9, 1676.

I AM sorry, my love, that the post should have delayed my letters. I know the regard you have for me, and how anxious you are about me; but it is only to apply to the great d'Hacqueville, when I am sure of all the assistance I can possibly desire. I shall never forget, while I live, the pleasure and consolation I enjoyed at the Rocks, from one of his letters, when you had just lain in; and I may safely say, that had it not been for that letter, I should never have been able to support the grief I then endured. I persuade myself you will have reason to be satisfied by to-morrow, unless madame de Bagnol's lacquey, of whose care I am not without some little apprehension, has thrown my letter aside. You will have seen in it, if it be come to hand, my answer to yours, wherein you wish me to wait the arrival of M. de Grignan. I desired you not to think of such a thing; I told you that it was not because the season was less advanced, that I wished you to come before M. de Grignan, but entirely on account of my extreme desire to see you, which made me conjure you to favour me with this small advance of pleasure, which I might very well claim, from my singular moderation, in not insisting upon your quitting your château till M. de Grignan should set out for the assembly of the states; that

I had laid my account with having you every moment of the time you gave me a right to expect; and that, in short, I conjured you, as I now do again, to think seriously of setting out this month, according to the agreement we had made. I flatter myself M. de Grignan will find nothing unjust in this. I have sent you the sum you will have occasion for till his arrival: I think you had better travel in a litter as far as Rouane, and then take water to Briare, where my carriage will meet you. This, my child, is what is most material in my letter, in case, as is likely enough, it should be lost.

The abbé de Bayard informs me, that I did extremely well in not going to Vichi this season; that the continual rains have almost entirely spoiled the waters; that Saint Herem and Planci, who went there on purpose, did not use them; that the only person who took them, was M. de Champâtreux, who was by no means satisfied with their effects: in short, his letter has afforded me infinite satisfaction; I was at a loss how to account for my own obstinacy, and find this to have been the very thing that caused it. I am now using a kind of mess for my hands, composed of deer's marrow, and Hungary-water, which, according to some, is to perform miracles. But what has really done me a great deal of service, is the extraordinary fine weather we have had; those crystal days of autumn, when it is neither hot nor cold: in a word, I am quite transported with them; I walk from ten in the morning till five in the afternoon, without losing a minute; I then retire to my apartment with the most perfect submission; though it is not without considerable mortification, finding by this, to my no small regret, what a weak mortal I am, whom a foolish timidity forces to break with my charming evenings, the oldest friends I have in the

world, and whom, perhaps, I accuse very unjustly of being the authors of all my ailments. I then fling myself into the church, where I remain without once lifting up my eye-lids, till they come to tell me there are lights in my apartment. I must have the degree of obscurity which the church or the woods afford, or else three or four people to chat with in the twilight: in a word, I follow your prescriptions with scrupulous exactness.

The news about Brisacier is confirmed; it has been discovered by his letters to the king of Poland, that he endeavoured to occasion a rupture between him and our monarch; so he is now in the Bastile, and his fate hangs in the scales, suspended betwixt the gallows and a dukedom.

There is much to be said on the subject of Germany. The general has met with a slight mortification again respecting the escorting of a convoy; he has been under the necessity to draw nearer to us, while these brutal Germans, as soon as he has repassed the Rhine, will lay siege to Brisac, as they did last year to Philipsburg. It would be unpleasant enough were this to happen. There is great dissension in the army, I mean that of M. de Luxembourg. I have just received a note from d'Hacqueville, who was at Versailles on Wednesday, to expedite the regulation for the assembly. I must acknowledge there never was such a friend as he is. The moment you have recommended any business to his care, he is so diligent and punctual in executing it, that one would often be tempted to think he had nothing in the world besides to attend to.

LETTER CCCCLXV.

TO THE SAME.

Begun at Livri and finished at Paris, Oct. 14, 1676.

I THANK you for your complaisance, and for the regard you prove for me in the resolution you have adopted, of setting out before M. de Grignan. I embrace, and thank him too, for his goodness in consenting to it. I am at no loss to know what he suffers from your absence, but it is for so short a time, that he ought not to grudge me this pleasure: his share of your company is always greater than mine. I now earnestly recommend you to provide a good guide for your journey; it grieves me to think of the irksomeness it will be attended with; I would consign you to the care of Montgobert: take books with you; and, for Heaven's sake, caution your muleteers against taking any short cuts, in the way from your house to Montelimart; let them keep the carriage-road. They brought madame de Coulanges the way I have cautioned you against, and but for du But, who alighted in an instant, and supported the litter, she would have fallen over a frightful precipice; she has told me this adventure fifty times, which has almost terrified me to death. I have been waked several times in the night, with the fear, lest they should bring you by this tremendous way. I conjure you, my dearest, to give this charge to some one who will have more care about you than yourself I shall write to a M. le Chatelain at Moulins, who will render you a great many little attentions; he is a very worthy, and very civil man, with a great deal of good sense, and some piety. You will see M. de Gamaches there too, a lady of the family of Montmorin, a lively and a pretty wo-

man. She was my constant companion both the times I was at Moulins, or at the mesdames Fouquet, without once leaving me, though I was there in all four or five days. In short, she is my best friend at Moulins.

M. de Seignelai is gone post to Marseilles about some affair which concerns the marine, though we know not what it is. Brisacier and his mother are still in the Bastile. The mother has obtained leave to have a woman to wait on her; but his grace is obliged to be his own valet.

Your philosophical physician shoots from too great a distance to hit; he thought me ill, when I am perfectly recovered; and I can assure you, the advice they gave me here, was diametrically opposite to his. I shall conclude my letter to-morrow at Paris.

Thursday 15.

I am now at Paris. I slept at Saint-Maur, where I went from Livri. I saw M. de Rochefoucault, and we had a long chat together. Had *Quanto* pursued a different line of conduct from what she did the year she returned to Paris, she would not have felt the mortification she now endures; it would have been a proof of good sense had she done so: but how great is human weakness! we wish to husband our last remains of beauty; and this economy often ruins more than it enriches. The *little good lady* is still in Flanders; this serves to stop some folks' mouths. I have discovered, that my reveries at Livri have a wonderful conformity with people's conjectures here. I have not yet seen madame de Coulanges; I shall not go there till I have sealed this packet. They tell me she is perfectly recovered, and that epigrams are beginning to dawn again. I shall present your compliments to her, and, at the same time, deliver your letter for her husband.

It is said, that Brisacier's crime is an abuse of his office, by forging a letter from our queen to the king of Poland, requesting him to ask of our king the title of duke for her secretary. This news must have been brought by the Polish courier, and the secretary is to be tried. You know what it is to abuse the seal and confidence of a queen of France. *The duke de Brisacierski*, I fear, will be hanged.

I foresee my son will return, instead of going to the Meuse, where his evil genius seems to have sent him: he has got the rheumatism in his hip, which will be an excellent thing to procure him leave of absence. If the fine weather continue any longer, I shall go for a short time to Livri. My house is quite ready for me, and every thing in order, which is a main point. Pray write to me about your setting out, and I will write to you on Friday in return, about your mode of travelling from Briare or from Orleans. You are in the right when you say, that Amonio will amuse himself at Rome, with the adventure of the Reformation of Chelles, of which he was the author: I told you his uncle is lord of the bed-chamber to the new pope: you have written me as much concerning this affair, as will furnish matter for a dozen epigrams. You are the oddest creature in the world, with all your wisdom and gravity; and would you take care of my spleen, I really think I should be immortal; they tell me all my evil springs from thence. Think, my dearest, of coming to see me; I cannot wait calmly for the transporting pleasure of embracing you; no, my spirits are all on wing to meet you. Adieu; I shall write to you on Friday. I have not seen a soul yet; you know how I love to collect scraps for your amusement. One thing I can never inform you of, which is, the extreme affection I bear you.

LETTER CCCCLXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, Oct. 16, 1676.

Really, my dear child, I never saw such idiots as my own children are; they prevent me from returning to Livri as I intended. I see you are going to laugh at this, and that you are far from pitying me for being obliged to break my engagement with Livri on the 15th of October.

D'Hacqueville, Corbinelli, and M. and madame de Coulanges, will agree with you in saying, I ought never to leave them again. It is, notwithstanding, true, that had it not been for you and my son, I should have continued my solitary way of life with pleasure: I enjoyed myself more in one day, than I can do here in a fortnight: I prayed and read a great deal; talked of the other world, and the method of going there. The father prior has more sense than I thought he had, though I always found him a very worthy creature. In short, I am now once more got into the vortex.

I must wait on M. Colbert on the subject of your pension: d'Hacqueville will take me to him, as soon as that minister will return to Paris, and will thus save me a trip to Versailles: so much for madame, now for monsieur. You must know, then, that his ill fortune had sent him to the banks of the Meuse; when his good fortune interfered and gave him the rheumatism in his thigh and his hip, which is so painful to him, that he cannot bear his own weight. He is now at Charle-

ville, and entreats me to request leave of absence for him: I must thus again wait on M. de Louvois, and this is another business on my hands! Had not I reason, my beauty, to complain of my children, and even to rail at them?

M. de Coulanges had written you a very pretty letter interspersed with verse in many places, in which he told you all the care and attentions which have been paid to madame de Coulanges in her illness; and that the marchioness de la Trousse, who had staid at Berry, on the news of her being dangerously ill, was the only person that had like to have died with grief, on learning the account of her resurrection*. This circumstance, though the invalid had often laughed at it, presented itself to her imagination in this instance, accompanied with a certain black vapour, so that she reprobated it in the strongest terms; and her husband took the letter, rumpled it together, and threw it into the fire. We were astonished at what happened; he has now written another, which is flatter than the paper itself. The first he wrote was admirable; we considered it as worthy to be preserved, as a model on such occasions.

M. de la Valliere is dead; several operations were performed upon him; and he is gone at last. Sister Louise de la Misericorde† sent a petition to the king, praying that the government may be reserved for payment of his debts, without mentioning his nephews.

* The marchioness de la Trousse was so jealous of the pretended attachment of her husband to madame de Coulanges, that it was thought this piece of wit might safely be hazarded.

† Francoise-Louise de la Baume-le-Blanc, duchess of Valliere, then a nun in the Carmelites, of the Rue Saint Jacques at Paris, was sister to John-Francis de la Baume-le-Blanc, governor and grand seneschal of the province of Bourbonnois, who died 13th October, 1676.

The king has granted her request, and has desired she might be informed, that were he a person of sufficient piety to visit so holy a Carmelite, he would go in person to tell her how much he shares in her loss. Madame de Soubise is returned from Flanders; I have seen her, and returned her visit to me, on my arrival at Paris from Britany. I thought her very handsome, except the circumstance of the loss of a front tooth, which has a sad effect; her husband is in perfect health, and as gay as a lark. The *great lady* has had an explanation with *Quanto*, and has shown how incapable she was of encouraging a new flame. It is impossible to enjoy a greater degree of health than she now does; great changes may happen before the end of another day: in short, she is now at the highest pitch of happiness; she has received four hundred louis-d'ors for the dresses for Villers Côterets, where the St. Hubert holidays are to be spent; it is thought this party may be broken up, and that nothing is certain respecting it, but the great expense the ladies have been put to. She has been silly enough to dip deep with the silk-mercer; she would have done better had she spent part of her money in something else; as it is impossible to buy a new face, dress is thrown away upon her. It is said, mademoiselle d'Elbeuf told Monsieur, that madame de Richelieu paid the duke a compliment, on madame's being brought to-bed of a daughter; this has occasioned swarms of sayings and contradictions, goings and comings, and justifications, which do not all weigh a grain.

I sent you a long discourse of father Le Bossu about the moon; I think it was in the packet of the twenty-fifth that miscarried, for which I am still heartily sorry. I long exceedingly to hear you speak about setting out: I think your best way will be to proceed on to Orleans; it is but a day's journey farther: you will there find

Beaulieu, who will have a carriage ready for you; and the next morning, be assured, I will not fail to send mine to receive you: that of Orleans will bring your people, with all your luggage. Farewell, my dearest: think of the execrable road from Grignan to Montelimart. I am heartily sorry you have suffered so much from the importunities of your M. de C***: he is as black as a mole, and as blind too: I think I see your despair; it is impossible to be master of a foot of land, without being plagued with a thousand of those impertinent visits.

LETTER CCCCLXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, Oct. 21, 1676.

Good Heavens, my child! is it possible you should imagine the world disapproves of your coming to see me, or that any human being could be surprised at your leaving M. de Grignan, for so short a time, in order to give me this proof of your love? I am sure it would be much more difficult to justify the contrary conduct, and it would puzzle your friends a great deal more to find an excuse for this, than to defend the journey you are about to take. Make yourself easy, therefore, on that subject, and be assured, you cannot give a stronger testimony of your discretion and good sense, than by showing the affection you bear me on this occasion. D'Hacqueville will tell you his sentiments of the business; and as M. de Grignan must by this time have set out for the assembly, I begin to discover the dawn of your departure.

Madame de Verneuil will pass her Allhallow-tide at Lyons; she asked me, whether she might not expect

to meet you. I told her, it was not impossible. Amonio is going there likewise; should you stumble upon him, I doubt not but you will give him a handsome reception. I am now writing to M. de Grignan, and to his grace the archbishop, to solicit their interest and support on my side, against you. I am in no small perplexity; I have been to ask leave of absence for my son, who is ill in the rheumatism at Charleville: M. de Louvois told me, very obligingly, that, if I wished it, he would ask the king; but at the same time that my son would, by such a request, not only very ill make his court to his majesty, but would even run the risk of a refusal; that the little Villars, and many others, had actually experienced a denial; that his advice to him was, to get cured quietly at Charleville; that, had M. de Schomberg's certificate been taken of his case, when with the army, there would have been no doubt of his obtaining leave to come home; but that a simple letter would produce no effect. I have informed him of all this, and at this moment have received a letter, in which, without having waited for mine, he tells me he is to set out with a friend, who is likewise coming home, and that he will be with me to-morrow. I fear he will bring himself into a scrape in consequence of this; I will not fail to let you know. Father Le Bossu will be pleased to hear what you say of him. His *Art Poetique* is much admired; you felt all its beauty without knowing to whom you were indebted for so much gratification. You will here find a translation of St. Augustine, *on predestination, and the perseverance of the righteous.* Our friends have come off in triumph in this work; it is really the most beautiful and the boldest piece that ever was written. You will see, likewise, in another style, Benserade's rondeaus; they are very different in merit; and, perhaps, were the good to be separated

from the bad, the former would be reduced to a very inconsiderable number; this printing is a strange affair.

I am going to tell you an extraordinary circumstance. Some folks send money to their husbands when in the army; Saint Geran sends money home to his wife; he tells her, that if she does not lay out the nine hundred livres he has sent her in clothes, he will not return home from his winter-quarters, so that the little lady has dealt largely with the mercer, according to the intention of the donor. Madame de Soubise has appeared with her husband at court with two coifs and one tooth less, so that there is not a word to be said. One of her front teeth was a little injured, and now it is entirely gone, leaving nothing but an immense gap, like that of the fat abbé's; it is a sad loss, though she seems to think nothing of it. The journey to Villers-Coterets is set aside; but it seems the king is kind enough to allow the ladies to appear at Versailles in their new dresses. But what is most astonishing, is the prodigious expense those ladies are at, without a sixpence but what his majesty supplies them with.

I seem to see you wandering over your meadows, like some shepherdess without her swain, solitary and tranquil, and very different from the continual agitation of these ladies: your mind enjoys perfect repose and serenity, and all your thoughts are hushed to peace, in comparison with the everlasting hurry of this country. But what is a shepherdess when absent from her swain? Your example will be the best answer in the world to this question. Madame de Coulanges is still troubled with returns of her fever, which gives great uneasiness, though it is almost the constant attendant on violent attacks. Langlade is returned from Frêne, where he has been in still greater danger than madame de Coulanges. I have paid him a visit, and must own he is charming-

ly lodged in the suburb. Madame de la Fayette is returned from St. Maur; she has had three regular fits of the quartan ague, a circumstance at which, she says, she is quite delighted, as her disorder will now have a name.

Five in the afternoon.

Do you know where I am? I defy you to guess. I am come in the finest weather imaginable to dine with our sisters in the suburb: you think I mean the faubourg St. Jacques; no, it is the faubourg St. Germain. Here I have received your letter of the 14th. I am now in the handsomest house in Paris, in mademoiselle Reimond's enchanting apartment, fitted up for her as benefactress to the house; she is at liberty to go out when she pleases, but she seldom stirs, as her principal object is her journey to paradise. I shall bring you here, both as a relic that belonged to my grandmother, and a person of curiosity, that must be pleased to see a delightful country-seat; you will really be charmed with it. I am, therefore, going to answer your letter from hence. And first of all, I conjure you to decide in my favour, and to hesitate no longer about taking the journey you promised, and which, in reality, you owe me. I am not the only one who thinks you are too irresolute about granting me that pleasure. Set out therefore, set out; you must certainly have taken your measures from the time of M. de Grignan's departure. I embrace him, and entreat you to give him my letter; I recommend to you, at the same time, that of his grace the archbishop, and cannot help saying, I trust more to them than to yourself, for a decision.

I have said as you did with respect to the regulation; there is no necessity to tell them, that when they are

ill, they cannot attend the assembly; this follows of course, and likewise, that if they are there, they will certainly be at the opening of it; that would be silly indeed! They will not be there at all, for it is not a place where people drop in by accident. I had corrected this article, without, however, changing the sense; but d'Hacqueville chose rather to have it sent away immediately, than to wait a week longer, alleging that the bishops, who were your friends, would find no difficulty in the matter, which those who were not, always would: the intendant, at least, can never be supposed to fail in it; but really this affair vexes me. Do not you admire the brilliancy and power occasioned by the reflection of the sun? *Se mi miras, mi miran:* shall we never receive a single ray? I said yesterday to the son of an unfortunate person*, that if with his transcendent merit and valour, which even pierce through the gloom of his distress, he had the same good fortune which others have experienced, a temple would have been erected to him. So far I am right, but then this very circumstance would have spoiled him.

You have reason to say you could not possibly form to yourself an idea of madame de Coulanges in the agony of death, or of M. de Coulanges in affliction. Neither could I have believed it, had I not witnessed it: liveliness on a death-bed, and gaiety in tears, are things altogether incredible. The poor soul had another fit yesterday; there is no escaping at once from such disorders. When I reflect that, at the end of ten months, my hands are still swelled, I can hardly forbear laughing; for as to pain, that has long been over. I shall warn Corbinelli to beware how he reasons with you, unless in due form; for he is so perfectly mad, that we are not safe with him. He is now busy writing

* The count de Vaux.

rondeaus on the recovery of madame des Coulanges; I am to correct them, so you may judge of the perfection of the composition. Adieu, my dear child, set out, I beseech you, and come to me; be decided for once, and cease to animadvert upon the propriety of your journey; be assured there is no inconsistency in it: I am not singular in my opinion; every body agrees with me.

The abbé de Pontcarré showed me yesterday what you wrote him about the cloak he gave away so rashly; it is very amusing. The conduct of our cardinal is, without doubt, admirable; accordingly the world does him justice, and he has no reason to be dissatisfied with the honour he has reaped from it.

LETTER CCCCLXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Friday, Oct. 23, 1676.

Here is the second volume of the *frater* for you. I sent a carriage for him yesterday to Bourget, and came myself with another coach and six to meet him here, where I was not sure of his arrival so precisely; chance, however, which is sometimes droll enough, brought us all together at the end of the avenue; this circumstance of our punctuality made us laugh. We went in, embraced, talked of twenty different things at the same instant, asked each other questions without either hearing or waiting for an answer. In short, the interview was accompanied with the tumultuous joy, which commonly attends these first moments. In the mean time the gentleman limps, cries out, boasts of a rheumatism, when he is not in my presence; for that it seems embarrasses him, and, as we have remarked of others, smothers half his complaints. In my delirium I said, and I firmly

believed it, that my thigh was blue; it was that which was the most painful; I have therefore allowed him to say he has a blue thigh, provided he will own that he has a green head likewise. This you will say is a strange composition. Do not however mention this to Montgobert: she would not fail to make a bad use of it against the baron this winter, who is preparing on his side to plague her. She writes the most diverting things imaginable both to him and me: yet we can see through all this good humour, that she is ill, which we are really very sorry for. My son will therefore remain here a few days, till the attestations necessary for procuring him his leave of absence arrive from Charleville, or till the troops that marched for the Meuse are returned, as they say they will; because, it seems, the duke of Zell, who threw us into this panic, is retired, and possibly is as much or more afraid than we are. Such is the situation of our abbey; they heartily wish I were obliged to leave them, in order to meet you, for it seems there is no such thing as being happy without you. Surely you must be determined by this time, or you never will; at least you cannot doubt how earnestly I desire it. M. de Grignan must be on his way to the assembly; in justice therefore, you ought to be on your journey: were this the case, I should be less sorry for the loss of this letter, at least, than the large packet of the twenty-fifth, for which I am still vexed. If you find my hand somewhat unsteady, you need be under no apprehension on that account, it is only because my fingers are benumbed with the cold. Adieu, my dearest, I resign the pen to *the lame gentleman.* It was said the other day, that an advertisement had been published, to know what had become of M. de Luxembourg's army, and that the great Condé said, when he set out, *A fine command truly! and will last, I presume, till the*

month of July! They say too, that M. de Luxembourg* has made a better funeral panegyric on M. de Turenne than even M. de Tulle, and that cardinal de Bouillon will give him an abbey. The manner in which you express yourself of the cardinal, "free from sacrilege in the conclave, and even from a peccadillo on the road," is admirable.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

I AM now settled in this place, almost as well as you could wish. I have a blue thigh, it is true; but I can by no means agree to the story of the green head. I should be glad, however, to exchange the blueness of the one for a little verdure on the other; I am sure I should walk with a much better grace. I have received your letter, my dear little sister, and thank you for your care and solicitude about me. If I am not mistaken, we shall be very happy together this winter: yet, for all that, remember I told you I should never forget your interested heart; saving this circumstance, I shall have a tolerable good opinion of you, in spite of your irresolution, of which I have heard a great many impertinent things: we will scold you at a more convenient time: only come and see my dear good little mama, who is wonderfully well, and as handsome as an angel. If you say your coming is therefore in no degree necessary for the recovery of her health, I would have you to know it is very much so for the preservation of it; which comes to the same thing.—"*Come, queen of*

* Marshal Luxembourg experienced in those days what happens to most great men. He was at first exposed to the arrows of envy and ill-nature, till at length both were silenced by his victories, and gave place to panegyrics and universal admiration.

the gods—come, gracious Cybele, come *." You will, indeed, pass well enough with us for one descended from the skies; but even should you come without any equipage, you would not feel as if you had dropped from the clouds; our dear pretty mamma has provided for every thing. Adieu, my beautiful little sister! my compliments and respects to M. de Grignan a thousand times.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

I AM a fool; I have committed a sin against geography: you do not come by Moulins at all, the Loire does not go that way. I ask your pardon for my impertinence: but come, and scold and laugh at me at the same time.

LETTER CCCCLXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Wednesday, Oct. 28, 1676.

IT is impossible to be more surprised than I am, at learning that M. de la Garde's marriage is broken off! It is broken off! Good God! did not you hear the scream I gave? The whole forest has repeated it, and I find myself happy in being in a place where I have no witness of my astonishment but the echoes. When I get to town, I can put on the air and mien of a friend, without difficulty. I approved of this marriage on account of the great regard I have for him; and for the same reason, I change my opinion, as he has done. Would to God he was disposed to accompany you! he

* A verse in the opera of Atys.

would be the very person I could wish, of all others, to be your conductor.

I am astonished the assembly is not yet opened. M. de Pomponne was of opinion, it would take place on the fifteenth of this month. So you are to pass the holidays at Grignan; but when these are over, will not you then, my child, think of setting out? But I have harped so long on this string, and you know so well what would give me pleasure, that I shall say no more about it. The *frater* is still here, waiting the attestations which are to procure him his leave of absence. He limps, takes medicines, and though we are threatened with all the severity of the ancient discipline, we yet live content, hoping we shall not be hanged. We chat and read; my gossip, who sees I stay here purely out of love to him, complains of the rains, and omits nothing which he thinks may divert me; and to say the truth, he succeeds to a miracle.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

The daughter of my lord Alcantor then refuses to marry my lord Sganarelle, who is no more than five or six and fifty *: I am very sorry for it, every thing was fixed, and all the expense defrayed. I imagine there was some obstacle which we were not aware of; the chevalier *de la Gloire* † will no longer be uneasy about it, that is one comfort. My mother stays here purely out of regard for me, who am a poor criminal daily threatened with the Bastile, or else with being cashiered. I am in hope, however, that every thing will be quieted by the sudden return of the troops. My present con-

* *Vide* Molière's Mariage Forcé, Scene 2d.

† The chevalier de Grignan.

dition were enough to bring this to pass; but this, it seems, is out of fashion. I do what I can to console my mother, both in regard to the bad weather, and for her leaving Paris; but she refuses to hear me when I mention this point. She is always reminding me of the care I took of her in her illness, and, as far as I can guess from her conversation, she is vexed that my rheumatism is not general, and that I have not a continual fever, that she might have an opportunity of showing her affection for me, and the extent of her gratitude. It would please her exceedingly, could she once see me reduced to the necessity of confession; but unluckily it is not likely to happen this time, so she must be contented with seeing me limp about, as M. de Rochefoucault was wont to do, though he now walks as nimbly as any one. We are in hopes of seeing you soon, so do not deceive us, and let us have no more trifling; they say you are much given to this sin. My beautiful little sister, adieu, I embrace you with all imaginable truth and cordiality.

LETTER CCCCLXX.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Friday, Oct. 30, 1676.

I RECEIVE, my dear child, with the highest sense of your regard for me, what you tell me, with a view to strengthen both my heart and my mind against the evils of life, to which, I own, I cannot easily submit: nothing can be more rational, or more worthy of the character of a Christian. I see your constant care is to preserve my splenetic feelings in good order; and perhaps the calm precepts of wisdom you teach me, are not less salutary than pleasures of a more joyous nature.

I will, however, put an end to this lecture, not because I have little to say upon the subject if I wished to expatiate upon my sentiments, but because I am sensible it is not a proper one for a letter.

We are told wonders of the good qualities of the new pope *; all the credit of this choice falls to our friend cardinal de Retz. As for M. de Paris (de Harlay), the wonders we hear of him are of a very opposite nature: he has got the better of the commissaries, whose consciences were more delicate than his, in establishing the point, that the king has a right to nominate the abbesses of several nunneries, and particularly those of the order of the Cordelières, and it is already begun to be put in practice, to the great scandal and offence of every body. The four commissaries who were against it, are Pussort, Boucherat, Pommereuil, and Fieubet. Six of the nuns of Chelles have been selected to be abbesses in different places: La d'Oradour, it seems, is not of the number, which mortifies her completely, for she has the true spirit and turn for the stormy little court of the cloisters.

I have been vexed to think of the little time M. de Grignan has been able to devote to his family; neither the expense nor the business of his situation have known the smallest intermission. I think Provence so subject to commotions, and the presence of its governors, of

* Benoît Odescalchi, Innocent XI., elected Sept. 21. As he was the son of a banker, Pasquin said, "Invenerunt hominem sedentem in telonio." Voltaire says, he was a virtuous man, a wise pontiff, little of a theologian, but a courageous, firm, and liberal prince. He had a long quarrel with Lewis XIV. A speech, remarkable for simplicity, is related of him, which proves that he was no great Latinist. His secretary was reading some bulls he had drawn up, and explained them to him in Italian: the pope wept with joy, and exclaimed; "Che cosa diranno di noi nella posterità, quando vedranna cosi bella latinità nostra!" What fine things posterity will say of us, when it sees our beautiful Latin!

course, so highly necessary, that I tremble lest he should not obtain leave of absence. I shall say no more about your departure; you tell me it depends wholly on God and myself: of my wishes and my decisions, you cannot entertain the smallest doubt, so that the affair, on the contrary, rests wholly on God and you; let me beseech you, therefore, my child, not to oppose his designs, but frankly follow the dictates of your heart, and even of your reason. Reproaches sting me to the soul; which I think you will easily admit, when I tell you, that I would sacrifice, if it were necessary, my dearest hopes to them. You are reasonable, and what is more, you love me; you know what you wish, what you can effect, and what is proper for you, better than I do: it is for you to decide, and I am certain M. de Grignan and the archbishop will consent to any thing you propose to them. Adieu, my dearest: I am not disposed to enter upon any other subject; we are still in our forest: we read Saint Augustine, and are become true converts to predestination and perseverance.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

I CANNOT allow that we are converted yet, and I will tell you why: we are both of opinion, that the arguments of the Semipelagians are extremely solid, and full of good sense, while those of Saint Paul and Saint Augustine seem so many fine-spun cobwebs, more worthy of the abbé Têtu, than of them. We could have put up with religion tolerably well, if these two saints had never written; but this is a continual stumbling-block. Adieu, my pretty little sister: make haste and come to us; I shall be heartily glad to see you, if I am not hanged before you arrive.

LETTER CCCCLXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Wednesday, Nov. 4, 1676.

NOTHING can be more true than the proverb, which says, that liberty is destroyed by uncertainty. Were you under any sort of restraint, you would have determined what to do long ago, and not have been like Mahomet's coffin, suspended between heaven and earth; one of the load-stones would certainly, by this time, have got the better of the other. You would no longer be *dragooned*, which is a very unpleasant state. The voice you heard, in passing the Durance, exclaim, *Ah, mother! mother!* would pierce to Grignan: or at least, that which counselled you to leave it, would not haunt you at Briare: for which reason I maintain, that nothing can be more opposite in its nature to liberty, than indifference, and indecision. Can it be possible that the sage La Garde, who has, it seems, resumed all his wonted wisdom, has likewise lost his free will? is he incapable of advising you? can he be at a loss to decide in this important point? you have seen that I decide like one of the councils. But how is it that La Garde, who is coming to Paris himself, cannot contrive that his journey may take place at the same time with yours? If you do come, it would be no bad thought to take the way of Sully; the little duchess would certainly convey you as far as Nemours; at least, you would find some friend or other, from day to day, so that you would have a relay of friends, till you found yourself in your own apartment. You would have met with a better reception last time, but your letter came so late that you took every body by surprise, and had nearly

missed me, which would have been a fine circumstance indeed; but we will contrive to keep clear of this inconvenience in future. I cannot help praising the chevalier *, who arrived in Paris on Friday evening, and dined here on Saturday; was it not very good of him? I was delighted to see him, and I assure you we spoke with great freedom of your scruples. I am now going to take a trip to Paris. I must see M. de Louvois on your brother's account, who is still here without leave, which vexes me not a little. I want to talk to M. Colbert likewise, about your pension: these two visits are all I have to make. I have some thoughts of going to Versailles, but will acquaint you whether I do so or not. In the mean time, we have the finest weather imaginable; the country has yet put on none of its horrors, and St. Hubert has favoured the hunter extremely.

We are still reading Saint Augustine, with pleasure: there is something so great and noble in his ideas, that all the mischief that weak minds can possibly receive from his doctrine, falls infinitely short of the good which others may derive from the perusal. You will imagine I give myself the airs of a learned lady; but when you see in what a familiar style this is written, you will cease to wonder at my capacity. You tell me that if you did not love me a great deal more than you say, you should love me very little: I am strangely tempted to scold you for this, even though I should risk the saying an unkind or an uncivil thing: but no; I am fully persuaded you love me; and God knows much better than it is possible for you to do, what a strong affection I entertain for you. I am glad to hear Pauline is like me, she will serve to put you in mind of me. "*Ah, mother! there is no need of that.*"

* De Grignan.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

When I think M. de la Garde is with you at the time you receive your letters, I tremble lest he should spy over your shoulder the nonsense I wrote you * some days ago. This makes me shudder, and I cannot help crying out, "Ah, sister! sister! were I as much at my own disposal as you are, and heard a voice as you did, exclaim, *Ah, mother! mother!* it would not be long before I was in Provence." I cannot for my soul conceive what it is that makes you hesitate: you give whole years to M. de Grignan, and to all the family of the Grignans: after this, what law can be so cruel as to hinder you from giving the poor pittance of four months to your own family? Never was law of knighthood, which the redoubted Sancho Pança swore by, half so severe; and if don Quixote had a writer of equal gravity with M. de la Garde to celebrate his exploits, he would certainly have permitted his squire to change steeds with the knight of Mambrino's helmet. Embrace, therefore, the opportunity of M. de la Garde, since he is now actually with you; settle the affair of your journey in concert, and know, that you have other duties to fulfil, besides what you owe M. de Grignan. We have no doubt of your heart, but this alone is not sufficient; we want proofs. Divide your favours, therefore, between both hemispheres, like the sun, which enlightens the whole world with his beneficent beams. Is not this an excellent argument to show you ought not to stay where you are? Adieu, my pretty little sister! my thigh is still blue, and I fear will continue so, all the winter.

* See the Letter of the 28th October.

LETTER CCCCLXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Friday, Nov. 6, 1676.

SURELY there never was so brilliant a letter as your last; I had some thoughts of sending it back, that you might have the pleasure of perusing it. I could not help wondering while I read it, how it was possible to wish so ardently to receive no more. This, however, is the affront I put on your letters: you seem to treat mine much more civilly.

This Reimond is certainly *hem! hem!* with the headdress you know so well; she has dressed in this style, as you properly observe, that she might seem qualified to hear the music of the blessed above; and our sisters have done the same from the wish of obtaining a fund of seven thousand livres, with a pension of a thousand, by which she is enabled* "to go abroad when she likes, and she likes it very often." We have never had such merchandise before; but the beauty of our house causes us to overlook every thing; for my own part, I am quite delighted with it: for in my opinion both her apartments and her voice are divine, *hem, hem.*

The dates you mention in speaking of madame de Soubise, are, thank God, amongst those which have quite escaped my memory. Some marked incivility must certainly have been shown during the festivities at Versailles. Madame de Coulanges informs me that the tooth has disappeared since the day before yesterday; in that case, you will conclude they can have no tooth

* Madame de Sévigné recants a little. See the Letter of the 21st October.

against her. You are very amusing upon my friend's * illness, and at the same time it is all true. The quartan ague of our friend of the suburbs †, is happily at an end. I have sent your letter to the chevalier ‡, without apprehension or reproof. I love him sincerely; and as for my *pigeon*, I wish I could give him a kiss; I have some idea in my head, I know not how truly, that leads me to think I shall one day or other see all these little folks. I cannot understand the eight months' child; pray is he likely to live a century? I fancy the gentlemen that fought it out so bravely in the streets, are in a fair way to live as long. It would really be a very pretty, and just punishment, for a battle in the street in the midst of summer. Adieu, my dear lovely child, I shall finish this in the good city of Paris.

Friday, at Paris.

So! here am I. I have been dining at the worthy Bagnol's, where I found madame de Coulanges in this charming apartment, embellished with the golden rays of the sun, where I have often seen you, almost as beautiful and as brilliant as he. The poor convalescent gave me a hearty welcome, and is now going to write two lines to you; it is, for aught I know, something from the other world, which I am sure you will be very glad to hear. She has been giving me an account of a new dress called transparencies. Pray, have you heard of it? It is an entire suit of the finest gold and azure brocade that can be seen, over which is a black robe, either of beautiful English lace, or velvet chenille like the winter laces you have seen: this occasions the name of transparency, which is, you see, a black suit, and

* Madame de Coulanges. † Madame de la Fayette.
‡ De Grignan.

a suit of gold and azure, or any other colour, according to the fancy of the wearer, and is all the fashion at present. This was the dress worn at the ball on St. Hubert's day, which lasted a whole half-hour, for nobody would dance. The king pushed madame d'Heudicourt into the middle of the room by main force; she obeyed, but at length the combat ended for want of combatants. The fine embroidered boddices destined for Villers-Côterets serve to walk out on an evening, and were worn on St. Hubert's day. The prince informed the ladies at Chantilli, that their transparencies would be a thousand times more beautiful, if they would wear them next their skin, which I very much doubt. The Granceis and Monacos did not share in the amusements, because the mother of the latter is ill, and the mother of the *angels* has been at death's door. It is said, the marchioness de la Ferté has been in labour there, ever since Sunday, and that Bouchet is at his wit's end.

M. de Langlée has made madame de Montespan a present of a robe of gold cloth, on a gold ground, with a double gold border embroidered and worked with gold, so that it makes the finest gold stuff ever imagined by the wit of man. It was contrived by fairies in secret, for no living wight could have conceived any thing so beautiful. The manner of presenting it was equally mysterious. Madame de Montespan's mantua-maker carried home the suit she had bespoke, having made it fit ill on purpose; you need not be told what exclamations and scolding there were upon the occasion: "Madam," said the mantua-maker, trembling with fear, "as there is so little time to alter it in, will you have the goodness to try whether this other dress may not fit you better?" It was produced. "Ah!" cried the lady, "how beautiful! What an elegant stuff is this! Pray where did you get it? It must have fallen

from the clouds, for a mortal could never have executed any thing like it." The dress was tried on: it fitted to a hair. In came the king. "It was made for you, madam," said the mantua-maker. Immediately it was concluded that it must be a present from some one; but, from whom? was the question. "It is Langlée," said the king. "It must be Langlée," said madame de Montespan, "nobody but Langlée could have thought of so magnificent a present: it is Langlée, it is Langlée!" Every body exclaims, "It is Langlée, it is Langlée!" The echoes repeat the sound. And I, my child, to be in the fashion, say, "It is Langlée."

FROM MADAME DE COULANGES.

I AM glad I did not die, madam, since you are to return here this winter. I am now at your house; I can no longer endure the sight of the chamber and the bed where I lay in the agonies of death. Why do not you come and make your appearance like the rest, in your transparency? You will be very glad, no doubt, to save your brocade; and I could swear there is no one so proper to take the advice of his highness about it as you. Pray how do you like this fashion? You are the first person I have written to with my own hand: there is something between us, though I know not well what it is. The abbé Têtu is not yet in winter-quarters. Adieu, madam: I wish for your return with sincerity and ardour.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

THIS is an excellent style for a dead woman. We laughed heartily at what you said of her and M. de la Garde, when you compared the extremity to which

they have both been reduced, and from which they have both recovered: this proves, that wisdom, like youth, returns to us from a great distance. I expect d'Hacqueville and the chevalier de Grignan every moment, to form my council of war, and to inform me of the destiny of the poor baron, whom I left at Livri in a very lame and forlorn condition. Adieu, my dear: if you have come to the determination we wish, I hope my letter will find you on your journey.

LETTER CCCCLXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Wednesday, Nov. 11, 1676.

This letter, I presume, will hardly find you at Grignan; though I am still at a loss to imagine what resolution you have formed, or to guess what it is you can possibly have to repent of. You tell us repentance will certainly follow your resolution; your having resolved to come by way of Lyons, can surely occasion you no regret; since, by doing so, you will give real pleasure to every one; and, at the same time, acquit yourself at once of your promise and obligation. For my part, I put my confidence in M. de Grignan, and am convinced it is to him alone I shall be indebted for what I wish with so much ardour.

I returned to this place on Monday. My son waits till the troops have taken certain measures: I was advised against soliciting his leave of absence, so that he leads, in a manner, the life of a monk in this abbey. He is glad I keep him company, and tells me, the strongest proof he can give of his love for me, is the great desire he has to send me away to meet you.

FROM MONSIEUR DE SÉVIGNÉ.

This reason alone could have rendered my dear little mother's departure tolerable. You will very soon know, by experience, the pleasure of seeing her after a long absence. I am still in the first transports of ecstasy: but when going to meet the divinity of Provence, whose charms have been so long hid from our eyes, is in question, every obstacle must fly before such an object.

Ce droit saint et sacré rompt tout autre lien *.

I am in hopes, too, this exile of mine will be of no long continuance. There is hardly a doubt of the return of the troops; and it is not unlikely I may arrive in Paris on the same day you do. Adieu, my adorable little sister, whom I love with all the tenderness I am capable of.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Should it happen that you are not yet set out, it is I who shall have reason to repent of my civilities towards you. I shall, in this case, be fully persuaded, that one ought never to remit the payment of a bill of exchange. I have thought of this a thousand times. The *worthy* is delighted with your kind remembrances. Farewell, my beloved child; I have no news for you. *Quanto* danced every dance at the last ball, as if she had been but twenty, and performed admirably. Every body is of opinion——. But, adieu: I am perfectly well; think no more about my health.

* This sacred right breaks each inferior tie.

LETTER CCCCLXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Friday, Nov. 13, 1676.

After all, then, you are at Lambesc, and at the very instant I was looking out for you, you are on the road towards the Durance: I ought to be as great a philosopher as yourself, to be able to bear with this. You little know the love I feel for you, if you omit any of the precautions you mentioned in your letter, in order to alleviate my sufferings on this occasion: you cannot be deceived in these, and the fault will lie wholly at your door, if I do not believe in your promises; after having fulfilled all the duties that could be expected from you in Provence, I think you must be eager to discharge what you owe to me. But I cannot help admiring the connexion there is between me and the public affairs: the overplus of what is wanted at your assembly must fall to my lot. As soon as I was informed of this circumstance, it pierced me to the heart; and as I know you sufficiently, I immediately perceived you were unwilling to leave M. de Grignan. It is certainly, as you say, one of the greatest events that can happen in a province; you will, no doubt, be extremely useful to him; and I am obliged to own, that nothing can be more becoming or worthy of you than such a conduct. I assure you, I much dread this consultation, when I reflect on the pains M. de Grignan has been at, to bring them to five thousand livres. I am wholly at a loss to conceive how he will be able to double the dose. I have always in my head the idea of a press which is drawn so tight, that at last the rope breaks. I entreat you to send me the detail of the whole busi-

ness; I am more taken up with the affairs of Lambese, than with those of Saint Germain; inform me of these, instead of answering my letters. Be sure, too, not to forget the account of the adventures you promised me; I love you should have something to acquaint me with. You did well to leave your baggage at Grignan; I wish, once for all, that you would return to the affair of your journey; you have made such a beginning, that I should much sooner expect to find you at Rome than at Paris. I am going to take a trip to the good city, in order to proceed with my men for St. Germain, on the business of your pension, after which, I shall hide myself again in this forest with the poor *frater;* his whole employment is to find amusement for me, and I am persuaded he thinks me the best companion in the world. I resign the pen to him, and embrace you with the most unfeigned tenderness.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

It is true, I am very glad to be here with my mother, and that I am not a little vexed when she goes away from me. I could have been satisfied to have parted with her, had she left me to go in quest of you; but I cannot so well reconcile myself to her leaving me for your pension, though I allow it must not altogether be neglected. My zeal for the king's service, and the attention that must be paid to it, leave me no doubt of the reasons that hinder your departure; I consider them worthy of you: your character would shine well on the stage; it never varies from the unities, and supports itself throughout to the very last scene of the drama. This extraordinary perfection makes me hope you will preserve the same uniformity in your conduct to me; I wish it, as I love you with all my soul: is not this

enough, think you, to deserve your regard? You never fail to attack me on a certain point, so as to give me to understand the superiority you have over me: but can you think that a man, who was capable of pleasing mademoiselle Agara, the mistress of five hours, for a whole winter, should be unworthy of being your brother? Do you remember what a pair of eyes she rolled? It is true, I was somewhat disposed to take a nap of an evening; but do not you do the same in a morning? You know not the pleasures of a sciatica; it is a delightful thing at night, though it is far from having the same pretensions in the day. Adieu, my beautiful little sister, I will give you time to be present at the Salvo, that is to be said over me. I conjure you to come to us speedily, if it be only to save my mother the trouble of writing to you so often: for my part, I talk to her in vain.

LETTER CCCCLXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, Nov. 17, 1676.

Ah, my child, the word indifference should not be used, in speaking of any of the sentiments of my heart for you. You say it appears in one of my letters; I have good witnesses as well as you, of the ardour with which I wish to see you: but in the midst of this real affection, I had fortitude enough to give you your liberty, being persuaded, that if it had been in your power to come, that very circumstance would have hastened your departure, rather than have retarded it; and that, in case you could not come, you would rather adopt suitable resolutions, than bring sorrow and reproaches with you. This made me write five or six lines which pier-

ced my heart with grief; but if it be true, as I believe it is, that your affairs will not suffer by it, and if you are willing to let me enjoy the pleasure of seeing you again; believe, once for all, without doubt or scruple, that there is nothing in the world I desire so much: and after giving M. de Grignan this proof of your love, which I highly approve upon so extraordinary an occasion as this, take the resolution of coming immediately, without waiting for him: a hundred accidents may happen to detain him. It would not be honourable for him to ask leave of absence, if the king should set out in March; perhaps, too, a cessation of arms may take place, as the pope requires: but, in the midst of all these uncertainties, be decided, and come with a good heart and a good grace, to communicate to me the most lively joy I am capable of feeling in this world. I am convinced M. de Grignan will readily consent to it; he writes to me with such an air of sincerity, that I cannot doubt it. A longer uncertainty would be prejudicial to that health which you love so much; I therefore yield myself up entirely to my former hope, and am persuaded you will come according to your promise.

I have been here since Sunday. I wished to go to St. Germain to speak to M. Colbert about your pension; I was very well attended: M. de St. Geran, M. d'Hacqueville, and others, consoled me previously for the cold reception I expected. I saw him. I spoke to him about this pension; I touched upon your constant occupation and zeal in the service of the king; I touched upon the great expense which persons in your station are obliged to incur, and which would not allow of your neglecting any thing to support them; I added, that it gave the abbé Grignan, and myself, much concern to importune him upon the subject: all this was

concise and proper enough; but it will not take me so long to tell you his answer: "Madam, I will think of it." He then led me to the door, and my negotiation ended*. I went to dine at M. de Pomponne's; the ladies were not there; I did the honours of the house to seven or eight courtiers, and returned without seeing any one: they would have spoken to me of my son and daughter, and what answer could I have made? This is the history of my expedition, and I am very much afraid it will prove of no manner of service to you. I hope, however, to succeed in time, but it is too certain that nobody has yet been paid. If you employed one of your domestics in an affair of importance, and if, at the same time, he should beg you to pay him a pistole that was due to him, would you hesitate to do it? But that is not the fashion at court. I am advised by every body not to ask leave of absence for my son, but wait the result of affairs in Germany; that, however, is a little tedious; and after I have passed a few days more at Livri, I shall return to Paris, provided I may have the hope of seeing you there; for if it were not for that, I assure you I should prefer Livri to the metropolis.

Gaming is no longer so universal as it was at Versailles. Every thing is at St. Germain upon the same footing as formerly. M. de Pomponne informs me, that our cardinal makes a great noise at Rome; there scarcely comes a letter from thence, that is not full of his praises; they would gladly have detained him there to assist the pope with his advice; he has acquired addi-

* Laconic as this answer was, it was a great effort and mark of attention. Colbert generally maintained a strict silence and complete immobility. Madame de Cornuel, out of patience at such a reception, said to him one day, "Make some sign, at least, sir, that you hear me."

tional fame in his last journey. He passed through Grenoble in order to visit his niece; I do not mean his beloved niece: it is a great misfortune to have no hopes of ever seeing him again; I must own that this is one of the reflections that make me melancholy. Peace is made in Poland, but in a manner somewhat romantic. The hero * at the head of fifteen thousand men, though surrounded by two hundred thousand, forced them, sword in hand, to sign the treaty. He had posted himself so advantageously, that nothing similar to it has been seen since the time of Calprenede †; this is the best news the king could possibly receive, on account of the great number of enemies which the king of Poland and the grand signior will take off our hands. Marseilles (the bishop) sent us word, that he had great difficulty in concluding this peace; I suppose as much as when this brave king was elected ‡.

Dangeau has thought proper to make presents as well as Langlée; he has beggared the farm-yard of Clagni; has collected for 2000 crowns the most amorous turtles, the fattest sows, the cows most full of milk, the sheep with the best fleeces, the finest goslings, and yesterday caused the whole tribe to pass in review, like that of Jacob in your cabinet at Grignan.

Your letter of the 10th is just arrived; I am truly pleased with the good resolution you have taken; it will be approved by every body, and you can hardly conceive the joy it gives me. In the vexation which your uncertainties occasioned me, I was going to tell you, that, far from loving me as much as you said, you loved me a great deal less, because you declined coming to see me; thus have I explained away the rude-

* John Sobieski, king of Poland.

† The author of several celebrated romances.

‡ This election happened on the 10th of May, 1674.

ness I was guilty of: but now I change my language, at the same time that I change my peevish humour for real joy. I believe yours was not inconsiderable at seeing cardinal de Bouillon; you had doubtless a great deal to say to each other. What I have told you of cardinal de Retz, agrees very well with all you have said concerning him: I do not doubt you feel as much grief as I do, at the thoughts of seeing him no more. I am very well pleased with your guides; do not fail to apprise me of every step you take. I am very glad to hear that the assembly was opened properly, and that the speech made upon the occasion was both elegant and well delivered. I shall go to-morrow to Livri to spend four or five days with your brother: and shall then return to this place, having nothing now to think of but your arrival, and whatever relates to it.

LETTER CCCCLXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Friday, Nov. 20, 1676.

Happiness, like misfortunes, never comes alone. I had received your letter of the 10th, which pleased me highly; I answered it immediately, and about an hour after received a note from the chevalier de Grignan, who wrote me word from St. Germain, that the enemies of the baron were retiring, and instead of hobbling to meet his company, as he had intended, he would be at liberty to return in five or six days; and that, in all probability, La Fare * would be the dove

* M. de la Fare was sub-lieutenant of the company of the dauphin's gen-d'armes, in which M. de Sévigné was ensign; he bought the commission of the marquis de la Fare in June 1677.

that was to bring the olive-branch. He, at the same time, gave me to understand, that your pension would shortly be paid. This intelligence greatly raised my spirits, and I returned yesterday to meet my son, who at least went halves with me in my joy. Our stay here will be very short; I shall now employ myself entirely in preparing to give you a good reception, and to go to meet you. I send a thousand remembrances to your two guides; they are the worthiest people in the world. I shall see cardinal de Bouillon as soon as he arrives. I believe Verneuil will write the life of the hero well: what you say of the conclave is extraordinary; but I cannot easily conceive how the cardinal should pass near enough to visit you, and should neglect it. He expressed so much friendship for you, that it is difficult to imagine, he should have a stronger desire to see his niece of Sault, than his dear niece: in short, he did not think proper to visit you. I hope you will reconcile yourself more easily than I do, to the thought of never seeing him again: I was born to perish by the absence of those I love.

Great hopes are entertained of peace, and I doubt not but you will be able to procure M. de Grignan leave to retire, if things do not take a new turn. Madame de Vins passed a whole day with me; she appears to me to have a great affection for you, and an earnest desire to be once more in your company.

FROM MONSIEUR DE SÉVIGNÉ.

I DID not doubt that you would feel the comparison of the sun, and that it would have the effect on you to make you hasten your journey, to complete the resemblance between you and that luminary. I have great hopes we shall not be hanged; our enemies are going,

and my liberty comes of course. With regard to M. de Grignan, I understand the people of Provence are more docible than I thought them, so that our family will not suffer any disgrace this time. You have seen the little cardinal; I am sorry the great one was not there too; such an interview, which might properly have been called a last adieu, would have given you pleasure, notwithstanding the melancholy reflections which must attend it. Adieu, my charming sister! adieu, my sun! you will do well to come and warm us; for at present the planet so called acquits himself but ill of his duty; we must not, however, complain of him.

LETTER CCCCLXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Wednesday, Nov. 25, 1676.

As I was walking in this avenue, I saw a courier arrive. "Who is it?"—"It is Pomier."—"This indeed is admirable. And when will my daughter arrive?"—"Madam, she must be already upon her journey."—"Come, then, let me embrace you. And is the gift of your assembly granted?"—"It is, madam."—"At what sum?"—"At eight hundred thousand livres." This is all well; our press is strong, we have nothing to fear; we need only pull the cord; it is strong too, there is no danger of its breaking. At last, I opened your letter, and am delighted with its contents. I easily discover the two characters, and perceive you are really preparing for your departure. I say nothing of the joy this gives me. To-morrow I set out for Paris with my son; he is no longer in danger. I wrote a line to M. de Pomponne, to recommend our courier to him. You

have fine weather for your journey, but I am apprehensive of the frost. The carriage shall meet you wherever you think proper. I am sending away Pomier, that he may go this evening to Versailles; I mean to St. Germain. I blunder in every thing, I am so hurried. I am at present perfectly well in health, and embrace you a thousand times.

LETTER CCCCLXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, Nov. 27, 1676.

At length, my beloved and amiable child, I direct this letter to you at Valence; this change gives me the highest satisfaction. I hope you have passed with caution the dangerous banks of the Rhone, and that you will write to me, in order to let me know where to send a carriage to you; if you wish it to come to Briare, I shall approve it highly, and will take care to send it, exactly when you want it. I returned yesterday from Livri, and brought your brother with me, because La Fare is arrived, and the whole business concluded. Upon my arrival, I saw the chevalier de Grignan, M. d'Hacqueville, madame de Vins, and M. de la Trousse: your return was the chief subject of our conversation. I wrote you word, that I had seen Pomier at Livri, and that I sent him to St. Germain with a note for M. de Pomponne. He is just returned; he has presented your letters to M. de Pomponne, who received them very graciously; the news of the grant of eight hundred thousand livres was very acceptable to the king, and to all his ministers. The order for your pension is promised on Monday next; I will see to it. Madame de Vins engages to procure M. de Grignan leave to re-

tire. His majesty was dressed so superbly, that every body present was puzzled to know what it meant. Adieu, my dear child: I know not how it happens, but I am tired of writing to you; what can this mean? Have I then ceased to love you? I do not think I have, and I believe you do not think so. I long to hear your voice, and to prove my affection for you otherwise than by words.

LETTER CCCCLXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, Dec. 9, 1676.

I MUST address another letter to you at Lyons. I expect one from you this evening: I shall make a strange noise, if I hear you have deferred your departure. I am going to scold you, my child, for two or three things: you did not tell me how you found the little nun at St. Mary's; yet you know how much I love her. You did not mention the affair of the agents of Provence. I have forgotten the third accusation; if I recollect it, you shall hear of it. I may be as angry as I please, now you are at Lyons; for you will hardly go back to Grignan; but if you were still at Aix, you would think me in so ill a humour as to decline coming to see me. In order to revenge myself, I have just sent M. de Grignan a letter, which contains the most agreeable intelligence. M. de Pomponne has obtained, very seasonably, our five thousand livres. The king, when he granted the pension, said, laughing, "You tell me every year that it shall be the last time." To this M. de Pomponne answered, with a smile, "Sire, all pensions are spent in your service." His majesty

was informed likewise, that the marquis of St. Andiol * was agent for the country: this made the king smile a second time; and he added, "that he saw plainly that M. de Grignan had been concerned in that nomination."—"Sire," said M. de Pomponne, "the election was carried unanimously, without a dissentient voice." Thus the conversation ended.

Ah! I have found the third subject I had to scold you about: if you had asked the place of seneschal of Grasse a little sooner, you would have obtained it; the chevalier de Sequiran applied for it, and it was granted to him about three weeks ago; he sold it for ten thousand livres, a sum which would have been of great service to you. There is nothing lost by proposing certain things: we have, at least, the pleasure of discovering whether they are feasible. Adieu, my dear daughter, I have scolded you enough now; and this first gust of ill humour blown over, you shall meet with nothing but mildness, tenderness, and transports of joy, in embracing you. The chevalier and Corbinelli have resolved not to write to you any more. The abbé de la Victoire † *mortuus et sepultus est* (is dead and buried).

LETTER CCCCLXXX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Sunday evening, Dec. 13, 1676.

What do I not owe you, my beloved child, for undergoing so much trouble, fatigue, languor, cold, frost, and broken rest! I have, as it were, suffered all these in-

* Laurence Veradier, marquis of St. Andiol, brother-in-law of M. de Grignan.

† The abbé Lenet.

conveniences with you; you were never a moment from my thoughts; I followed you every where in my imagination; and a thousand times I thought I was not worth the trouble to which you put yourself on my account; I mean with regard to some particular points, for my tenderness and friendship greatly enhance my merit with you. Good God, what a journey, and in what a season! You will arrive precisely on the shortest day of the year, and will consequently bring back the sun to us. I have seen a device, which suits me exactly; it is a leafless tree, apparently dead, with this inscription round it, *Fin che sol ritorni* (till the sun returns). What think you of it, my child? I have now no more to say to you of your journey, nor a single question to ask you upon that subject; we will draw the curtain over twenty days of the most extreme fatigue, and will endeavour to give a different course to your animal spirits, and different ideas to your imagination. I will not go to Melun; I am apprehensive that a dissipation, so little conducive to repose, might make you pass the night badly: but I shall expect you to dine with me at Villeneuve St. Georges; you will find the soup warm; and, without doing injustice to any one, you will there meet a person, who loves you better than the whole world. The abbé will wait for you in your own apartment, which shall be well lighted and a good fire in it. My dear child, how great is my joy! can I ever feel more exquisite happiness?

N. B. Madame de Grignan arrived at Paris at this period, and did not return to Provence till June 1677.

LETTER * CCCCLXXXI.

FROM THE COUNT DE BUSSY TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Bussy, May, 1677.

Come, madam, let us resume our correspondence. I was very sorry to leave you. I had begun to accustom myself to you again; and if any thing can reconcile me to the pain of being separated from you, it is the hope of receiving your letters. They give me so much pleasure, that if I could pass my life with you, which would be the greatest happiness I could enjoy, I should sometimes leave you, merely for the sake of writing to, and hearing from, you. Let us, therefore, make good use of the time during which fortune has thought fit to separate us; and, above all, let us not take things too much to heart; for this is the way to shorten the period of life. By things, I do not mean the affairs of this world only, I include also those of the other. In my opinion, the too great fear of being damned, is being damned already. There is reason in all things. Let us do good, and rejoice. In matters of conscience, too much nicety creates heresies. I wish to go no farther than paradise. I give you this little lecture, madam, because I know not to what degree of perfection you may aspire; and besides the impossibility of attaining it in your situation, I even consider it useless. Let us secure our salvation by the means our good kinsman St. Francis de Sales points out, who leads people to paradise by a very pleasant road.

I have no doubt that when you read this letter to the beautiful countess, she will exclaim that it savours strongly of father Rapin and father Bourdaloue. I know not whether they think as I do upon this subject,

but I assure you these sentiments are entirely my own, and that there is only one council that could make me change them. The little widow and I arrived here last Saturday. I have hitherto felt all the inconveniences arising from a new establishment: but I now begin to breathe, and I could receive you here if you would condescend to honour Bourbilly with a visit. Whatever you do, let me know, for you will not come near this place, if I do not meet you. Adieu, my dear cousin; I assure you I love you more than ever.

LETTER * CCCCLXXXII.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, May 29, 1677.

AGREED, my dear cousin: I am very willing to resume our correspondence. You began, you say, to be accustomed to me again. For a long time it has only been necessary for us to meet, to love one another as much as if we passed our whole lives together; and there is, besides, some little congeniality of disposition which runs in our blood, that would involuntarily attach us to each other, even if we did not consent to it with a good grace. We both dread melancholy so much, that we mutually console ourselves for our separation by the pleasure we receive from our letters. Let us enjoy this happy humour, my dear cousin; it will carry us a great way. For my part, I am quite well, and it is only to accompany my daughter on her journey, that I am going to Vichi. The pleasure of being there with her, will do me infinitely more service than the waters. I ask your pardon, good cousin, if I am not so manageable on the subject of her absence, as on yours. Provence grieves me, and my spleen is affected in all our

separations. I shall go with her as far as Lyons *, and shall then return to Bourbilly, or rather, to Epoisses; for the mansion of our forefathers is not in a state to receive me. If you would take a little trip to Forléans at that time, you would add very much to my comfort. I should like our widow to be there with you. I have a great affection for her: she has wit and good sense, and a gentleness and modesty that pleases me. She is never eager to show that she is wiser than others, and she knows much more than she affects to do: she says and does every thing with peculiar grace; in short, she merits the high esteem we bear her. I shall follow your advice in the noble confidence you think it necessary we should feel with regard to our salvation: I even fear you will teach me the fervent prayer you use every morning, which exempts you from devotion the rest of the day: this, to say the truth, is very convenient; but it is, at the same time, all we can do to get to paradise, for we shall certainly go no farther. This is the opinion of the Provençale.

To conclude, I commend to you my panegyric at the bottom of my picture: you had given me a merit I did not before possess, in your respect. It is dangerous to pass this boundary. He who passes, loses; and praises become censures, when they may be suspected of being insincere: every thing in the world is cut diamond-wise; it reflects in all directions.

Have you not heard that my son has been in treaty for the sub-lieutenancy of the dauphin's gens-d'armes with La Fare, for twelve thousand crowns, and his flag? This is a very pretty situation: it will bring us in forty thousand crowns †, and is worth the interest of the

* This project was not executed.

† La Fare, in his Memoirs, says 90,000 livres.

money. He will be at the head of his troop, M. de la Trousse being lieutenant-general. Peace will make this office still more desirable than war. If I have told you this before, as I suspect I have, it will do you no harm to hear it a second time. Adieu: I embrace you and my niece with great affection. Indeed, my dear cousin, from the way in which you solicit favours of the king, you ought to be heard.

LETTER CCCCLXXXIII.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Tuesday, June 8, 1677.

No, my child; I shall say nothing, not a single word, of my sentiments for you; the affections of my heart are sufficiently known to you; but can I conceal from you the uneasiness I feel on account of your health? I had not before been wounded in this part; the first trial is a severe one; I pity you for having the same anxiety upon my account; would to God my apprehensions were as groundless as yours are! My only consolation arises from the assurance M. de Grignan has given me, that he will not push your fortitude too far; he is intrusted with a life upon which mine entirely depends: that, indeed, is no reason why he should double his care; his own love for you is the strongest reason that can be assigned. In this confidence, my dear count, I again recommend my daughter to you: observe her well; speak to Montgobert; take your measures jointly in an affair of such importance. Dear Montgobert, I depend greatly upon you. Ah, my dear child, you will not want for any care from those that are about you! but their care will avail you nothing, if you do not watch over yourself. You think yourself better than any

body else does; and if you imagine that you have strength enough to go to Grignan, and soon after find yourself too weak to return to Paris; in short, if the physicians of that country, who will be unwilling to lose the credit of your cure, should reduce you to a state of still greater weakness; do not think I shall be able to support such an affliction. But I am willing to hope that you will do well, to the shame of this country. I shall not be very uneasy about the disgrace it will bring on our native air, provided I hear you are in a better state of health. I am at present with the good-natured La Troche, whose friendship is peculiarly engaging; no one else suited me: I shall write to you again to-morrow; do not deprive me of this my only consolation. I have a great desire to hear from you: for my part, I am in perfect health; weeping does me no harm; I have dined, I am now going in quest of madame de Vins, and mademoiselle de Méri. Adieu, my dear children! the carriage which I saw drive off, entirely engrosses my mind, and is the subject of all my thoughts.

FROM MADAME DE LA TROCHE.

My dear friend is come to communicate her affliction to me. She has just dined, and is now a little calmer than she was; be careful of your health, beautiful countess, and all will be well; do not deceive her concerning it, or, to speak more properly, do not deceive yourself; watch over yourself with attention, and do not neglect the least pain or heat you feel in your chest: it is of the highest consequence both to you and your amiable mother. Charming countess, adieu! I assure you I am very anxious about her health, and am yours with the most sincere affection.

LETTER CCCCLXXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, June 9, 1677.

I WENT yesterday to see madame de Vins, and mademoiselle de Méri, as I informed you; they had neither of them received the notes which I desired you to write for them: this disappointment made me in great wrath with the handsome abbé. I was sorry I did not take upon myself the care of all your little dispatches; I love to be punctual. But, my dear child, how are you? Have you slept well? You are set out, though it is but six o'clock in the morning. Madame de Coulanges sends to desire me to call upon her at Charleville, where she is, in order to go and dine at Versailles with M. de Louvois, whom I should not see for a long time without that opportunity. I shall therefore take this little excursion; M. de Barillon accompanies us.

I am in excellent health; would to God you had recovered your good constitution as I have mine! your health is, at present, my only care. I heard yesterday, that nothing is better for your disorder than chicken broth, and that madame du Frenoi in a great measure owed her recovery to it. Mademoiselle de Méri has acquired more skill by her experience in sickness, than a physician in health ever did by his learning and practice; she will soon write to you, and send me her letter. Adieu, my angel! I speak to you as you always speak to me; remember that my health depends wholly upon yours, and that nothing upon earth can do me good but your recovery.

LETTER CCCCLXXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, June 11, 1677.

I CANNOT help thinking, that if I had no pain except in my chest, and you had none except in your head, we should neither of us complain; but the state of your lungs gives me great uneasiness, and you are equally anxious about my head: well, for your sake, I will do more for it than it deserves; and I beg that you will, in return, take care to wrap yourself in cotton. I am sorry you wrote me so long a letter upon your arrival at Melun; at that time repose was what you chiefly wanted. Take care of yourself, my dear child: do not alarm yourself with groundless fears; endeavour to come and finish your visit, since, as you say, destiny, or rather Providence, has, contrary to all reason, made that which you intended me so short. You will be much more capable of putting this design in execution when in health, than in your present languishing state; and since you are desirous that my heart and head should be perfectly at ease, never think that they can be so if your disorder should increase. What a dismal, what a melancholy day was that of our separation! You wept, my dear child, and that is an extraordinary thing in you; in me it is not so, it is the effect of constitution. The circumstance of your ill state of health contributes greatly to increase my sorrow: I think, if I had nothing to suffer but being absent from you for a time, I could bear it well enough; but the idea of your being so thin, of your feeble voice, pale countenance, and altered person, is what I am utterly unable to support. If then you are desirous of conferring upon me

the greatest favour I can ask you, make it your chief study to get the better of the disorder under which you now labour.

Ah, my child, how great is the triumph at Versailles! what an increase of pride! what a solid establishment! what a second duchess de Valentinois * ! what pleasure occasioned even by broils and absence ! what a recovery of possession! I was a whole hour in her apartment; she lay on the bed full-dressed; she was taking her repose for the *media noche* (midnight repast). I presented her your compliments; she answered in the most polite terms, and praised you highly; her sister, with all the vain-glory of Nichen, cast several reflections upon the unhappy Io, and laughed at her being so audacious as to complain of her. Figure to yourself every thing that ungenerous pride can suggest when triumphant, and you will not be far from the mark. It is said, that the youngest sister will soon resume her former place among the ladies that attend upon Madame †. She took a solitary walk yesterday with La Moreuil, in the garden of marshal du Plessis; she went once to hear mass. Adieu, my beloved child! I have been quite destitute, quite sad, since you left me. We should consider nothing but Providence, in this separation; otherwise it will be impossible to comprehend it; but, perhaps, it is the means God makes use of to restore your health. I believe so, I hope so, my dear

* This was a name she gave madame de Montespan, in allusion to the famous mistress of Henry the Fourth, who preserved so long her empire and her charms.

† The king had a strong attachment for this canoness, called madame de Ludre, lady of honour to Madame. But he soon sacrificed her to the fury and artifices of madame de Montespan. He sent a present of two hundred thousand francs to this negleeted fair one. She refused them, and supported her misfortune with great dignity.

count; you have, as it were, answered for it; make it, therefore, the chief object of your care, I conjure you.

LETTER CCCCLXXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, June 14, 1677.

I RECEIVED the letter you wrote me from Villeneuve-la-Guerre. It is with pleasure, my child, that I learn you are better, and that repose, silence, and your obedience to those who have the care of you, have procured you a state of tranquillity which you did not enjoy here. As long as I live, you may, with security, entertain hopes of recovery: I will ingenuously own to you, that no remedy in the world is more efficacious in relieving my heart, than removing from my mind the idea of the state in which I saw you a few days ago. I cannot support that idea; I was even so much struck with it, that I could not perceive how much your absence contributed to my disorder. I have not hitherto entered into the reflections which naturally arise from the joy I have in seeing you, and the insipid life I lead without you; I have yet done nothing but think of your health, and shudder at the idea of what may happen; when my mind is at ease upon that subject, I hope you will begin to think of your return. But what a pity it is that you should make yourself uneasy about my health, which is now perfectly restored, and which can only be destroyed by the injury you do to yours! Avail yourself then of your reason, to prevent your being preyed upon by considerations, which are not capable of shaking the minds of persons of the meanest abilities; and exert your courage that you may not become the dupe

of the vain phantoms of too susceptible an imagination. I have an advantage over you in writing; you cannot reply, and I may make my discourse as prolix as I think proper. Montgobert's story is one of the most diverting I ever heard; attend to it, my child, and be not so earnest about trifles: for my part, my anxiety is but too well grounded; the situation in which I left you is by no means a vision. It has alarmed M. de Grignan, and all your friends. It makes me almost frantic when they say to me, "You will be the death of each other, you must be separated;" a fine remedy truly, calculated to put an end to all my sorrows at once; not, however, in the sense they mean: they read my inward thoughts, and perceived that I was uneasy about you; and why should I not be uneasy about you? I never knew any thing so unjust, as the treatment I have experienced for some time past. I do not complain of you; on the other hand, I am perfectly satisfied with your affection for me; you have not concealed your friendship from me as you thought you did. What will you say? Is it possible you can extract evil from so much good? Talk to me no longer, therefore, in that style: I must indeed be very unreasonable, not to be fully satisfied with you. Do not scold me for writing too much, it gives me pleasure: I shall conclude my letter to-morrow.

Tuesday 15.

I have just received two of your letters, dated from Auxerre: d'Hacqueville has been here; he was transported with joy at hearing of you. How thankful ought I to be at your present state of health! In a word, you sleep, you eat a little, and you feel refreshed; you are no longer oppressed, exhausted, and a

burden to yourself, as you were a few days ago. Ah! my child, how secure is my health when yours begins to mend! When you speak of the harm you have done me, it was merely from the condition in which I saw you: for with regard to our separation, the hope of seeing you again, sooner than usual, would have rendered it supportable; but when life is in question, alas, my beloved child! it is a grief I never felt before, and I own I should have sunk under it. It is therefore your part to restore and secure me from the greatest of all evils. I expect your letters with an impatience which convinces me that your health is my chief concern. I follow you from stage to stage. To-morrow you will be at Chalons, where you will find a letter from me; this goes straight to Lyons. The chevalier is beginning to recover; the fever has left him, as I was informed by the handsome abbé, who is so punctual in delivering your letters.

Io * was at mass; she was gazed at under the hood, but every body is insensible to her misfortunes and her melancholy. She will soon lead the obscure life she led formerly: the reason is obvious; it is not hard to conjecture it. No triumph was ever more complete than that of the others: it seems to be thoroughly established since it resisted the first attack. I was for an hour in that apartment; it breathes nothing but joy and prosperity; I should be glad to know who will trust to it henceforward. My beloved child, adieu! I am pleased that M. de Grignan approves your intended return. Your little brother is like Gargan, like Bagnols: he cannot set his foot to the ground; but his journey is not the shorter for that! Truly here is a mother well guarded! Believe once for all, my child,

* Madame de Ludre, canoness of Poussori.

that my health depends upon yours; would to God you resembled me in this!

LETTER CCCCLXXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, June 16, 1677.

So, this letter will find you at Grignan; alas! how are you now? Have M. de Grignan and Montgobert derived all the honour they expected from this escort? I have followed you every where, my dear child; has not your heart, as it were, seen into mine during the whole journey? I still expect your letters from Chalons and Lyons. I have just received a short letter from M. des Issards*; he has seen and contemplated you: you spoke to him; you assured him you were in better health: I wish you knew how happy he appears in my estimation, and what I would give to have the same pleasure. You must endeavour, my dear, to cure both your body and mind; and if you do not wish to die in your own country, surrounded by your friends, you must endeavour to see things as they are, and not magnify them by the force of imagination, nor think I am ill when I am well; if you do not form this resolution, it will be prescribed to you, as a part of your regimen, never to see me: I know not what effect this remedy might have upon you; but with regard to myself, it would infallibly put an end to my life. Reflect seriously upon that; when I was uneasy about you, I had but too strong reasons for being so; would to God it had been only a dream! The concern of your friends, and the visible alteration in your countenance, confirmed but too well

* A person of quality at Avignon.

my apprehensions and my terrors. Do all that lies in your power, therefore, my dear child, to render your return as agreeable as your departure was sorrowful and melancholy. With regard to me, what should I do? Should I be well? I am well. Should I take care of my health? I do it for your sake. In short, should I make myself entirely easy upon your account? this is what I cannot answer for, when I see you in such a condition as that you lately were in. I speak to you with sincerity; do not neglect my advice: and when they come and tell me how well you are, and when at the same time you find yourself so, we shall both be well; yes, very well: this is the best regimen; but when I am told that to enjoy our health we must be two hundred thousand leagues distant from each other, and am told so with an air of composure and gravity; this inflames my blood, and makes it boil with anger. For heaven's sake, my child, let us endeavour to recover our reputation, by showing ourselves more reasonable in another journey; when I say us, I mean you; and let us no longer give occasion for saying, "You will be the death of each other." I am so cast down by this subject, that I must discontinue it; there are other ways of killing me, which would prove much more effectual.

I enclose you the account Corbinelli has sent me of our cardinal and his worthy occupations. M. de Grignan will take great pleasure in perusing this narrative of his conduct. You must certainly have received some of my letters at Lyons. I have seen the coadjutor; I do not think him in the least altered; we had a great deal of conversation about you; he spoke of the folly of your bathing, and told me you were afraid of growing fat: the hand of God is undoubtedly over you: after being delivered of six children, what can you fear?

You are wrong to laugh at madame Bagnols, since you are capable of admitting such visionary ideas. I have been at St. Maur, with madame de St. Geran, and d'Hacqueville; every body spoke in your praise: madame de la Fayette made a thousand professions of friendship for you.

Monsieur and Madame are at one of their country seats, and will soon quit it for another; their whole retinue is with them. The king will pay them a visit, and, I suppose, his retinue will accompany him. The greatest cruelty is still practised*; is it possible that such dupes should still be found upon the face of the earth? News is expected every day of a battle seven leagues from Commercy: M. de Lorrain would gladly gain it in the heart of his own country, and in sight of one of his cities; M. de Crequi would be very sorry to lose it, because one and one make two. The armies are but two leagues distant from each other, without even the river to separate them, for M. de Lorrain has passed it: I am not much concerned at this intelligence, Boufflers being the nearest relation I have in the army of marshal de Crequi. My beloved child, adieu: make the best use of your own reflections and of mine; continue to love me, and do not conceal the precious treasure of your affection from me. Be not apprehensive that my affection for you can do me any harm; my life hangs upon it.

* Towards madame de Ludre. Her reign had only lasted two years. Madame de Montespan had persuaded the king she was covered with ring-worm. Madame says her features were regularly beautiful. Her portrait is in the museum in Petitot's collection.

LETTER CCCCLXXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, June 18, 1677.

My mind is wholly occupied with you; I cannot help thinking, that as you arrived yesterday evening at Lyons a good deal fatigued, you should immediately have been bled, to prevent the ill consequences of being overheated. You must certainly have suffered much upon the road. I hope you wrote to me when at Chalons, and that you will write again from Lyons. I must go in quest of some of the Grignans; I cannot live without conversing with some one connected with you. I will call on the marchioness d'Huxelles, and mademoiselle de Méri: in short, I must have intelligence of you. You have heard from me both at Chalons and Lyons; I send you now a second letter to Montelimart. It will doubtless amuse you to hear me still talking of Lyons and your journey: yet I cannot help dwelling upon that topic. But to come to the present time at once, how do you find yourself at your chateau? Did you think your pretty children worthy of amusing you? Is your health in the state I wish it? Days slip away, as you justly observe, and I am far from being so displeased at it, as when you are here; I do all I can to make them pass away as quickly as possible: I shall have no objection to their rapidity till we are together again. I depend upon La Garde for giving you information, and for letting you know the disgrace M*** has sustained; he was considered as an indolent being, who hated a military life; which is just the reverse of a good officer. What do you think has been done to

him? They have valued the place he purchased for forty-five thousand crowns, at two hundred thousand francs; and he was obliged to pay half of it for the place of Villarceau. His wife threw herself at the king's feet to soften his rigour; but his majesty told her, that he did not oblige her husband to quit the service with a view to please himself. Application was made to M. de Louvois, who said, that the king did not approve his service: thus their mortification was complete, and sufficiently proves, that no sin, in the present day, is so severely punished as indolence; others may sometimes be overlooked, but this is altogether unpardonable. I stop here in order to take a short excursion in town.

I am come back. I heard mass with the good marchioness d'Huxelles; I was then desirous of seeing mademoiselle de Méri; she was gone with madame de Moreuil. I went in quest of the Grignans, for I could not dispense with seeing them. The coadjutor had just left his house in order to come to me; I ran after him; he is here, and is writing to you at this moment. I conjure you, my child, if you love me, not to sleep in your apartment at Grignan; the coadjutor tells me that there is an oven immediately under your bed, and I know there is one above it: so that if you do not remove from these ovens, you will suffer more from the heat than you did here; pray comply with this request. I was informed that the king was at St. Cloud; he was alone, and the fair one was in bed. You will be told whether the ladies did not go in quest of him; for my part, I have heard nothing of the matter since. The handsome abbé will inform you, that our poor brethren (de Port Royal) have been suspected of wishing to make some amendments at Rome, in the late concessions, and that they were repulsed, and an order given

to all the bishops not to think of it; they have all promised it, and *probability* * is one of the opinions least likely to be established.

LETTER CCCCLXXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, June 23, 1677.

I HAVE been five days without hearing from you; the time appeared to me irksome and tedious. At length I have received your letter from Chagni, and your other from Chalons. Good heavens! my dear child, what just reason you had to complain of the mountain of La Rochepot! What joltings! and how singular a circumstance, that, even in the month of June, the roads of Burgundy should be impassable! You tell me great things of your health: but why is M. de Grignan silent upon the subject? after you have suffered so severely, he should give me some little encouragement. The tranquillity of the Saône must have been of great service to you. Do you remember our sad and bitter adieu in these plains? it is still present to my imagination. Those who are stationary have their evils; and all the places in which they have seen what they regret, excite in them gloomy ideas. I entertain as good hopes as I can; your health, my dear child, is one of the

* "In all cases of religion and morality, we may act from a probable opinion; and an opinion becomes so, from the moment it has been maintained by any learned doctor." Such was the doctrine the Jesuits were reproached with establishing. "By this means," says Pascal, "a single doctor may overturn consciences and destroy them at his pleasure in perfect safety." It may easily be conceived what advantage confessors and directors derived from this doctrine of probability, to humour the vices of the rich and great.—See the fifth Lettre Provinciale.

foundations of this hope ; you know the others. I suffer a great deal from the fatigue of long journeys. Let us say no more of Vichi, unless you wish to bring unpleasant ideas to your recollection : I know not what I should have done had I undertaken such a journey with so many little affairs upon my hands, which I never thought of when you were with me ; in short, I have not yet been able to go to Livri. Madame de la Fayette is returned from St. Maur very much indisposed ; her fever is increased considerably, and she has besides a very severe colic ; she has been bled ; if her fever continues she cannot live long ; her friends think of nothing but this new calamity The duke is perfectly well ; I shall make very heavy complaints to him of these dangerous roads. I leave my son to answer you upon the epic poetry, and your readings. I shall take care to present your compliments to all you have named ; the memory of absent friends is precious. The princess of Tarente is in despair, at not having been able to see you again : say a word respecting her, and the good Marbeuf who adores you, because you are beloved by me : I take pleasure in distributing your notes.

The coadjutor will inform you of the success of his extraordinary compliment to the king, and of his being at liberty to stay here as long as he thinks proper. The abbé de Grignan dismisses others, as he expects some day to be dismissed himself. The abbé de Noailles * did not think fit to accept the bishopric of Mende : his father and mother say that this son is their only comfort ; that his absence would occasion their death : well ! he may get a bishopric situated nearer to them. For my

* Lewis Anthony de Noailles, afterwards bishop of Chalons-sur-Marne, and at last promoted to the dignities of cardinal and archbishop of Paris.

part, I should have taken what was offered me, without a word: but they are both good and wise.

Cardinal d'Estrees, the Brancas family, madame d'Huxelles, madame de Coulanges, and myself, have dined with M. d'Haroüis. You were by no means forgotten; M. d'Haroüis is grateful for your remembrance; I said some pretty things to madame Gargan. Write a word or two to the good-natured d'Escars, who, you know, would go any lengths to serve you: I torment you, but it is because I do not like to hear any one complain of you.

Pray do not scold me for the length of my letters; I never write them at a sitting, but resume them at intervals, and they are so far from doing me any injury, that writing to you is my only pleasure. To this necessity are we reduced by absence; to write and receive letters supplies the place of seeing and conversing with the person whom we love better than ourselves.

You have written to me from your boat and from Theze *; wherever you are, you think of me; and I may say at least that I do you justice by a suitable return of gratitude and sense of your kindness. I feared you would suffer some inconvenience in your journey, but the bark came very opportunely. I approve your resolution of preferring water to land: but do not for that reason embark on a voyage to the country of the Sevarambes †; you appear to me to be too near them already. I thank you for the fable of the fly; it is quite divine; we meet with but too many applications of it; "See what a dust I raise!" Good heavens, what humour there is in that stroke! The little fly has no doubt that it was he that caused the cloud of dust.

* A seat belonging to messieurs de Rochebonne.

† An imaginary people.

There are many who resemble the fly of Fontenelle *, and think that they have done every thing themselves.

Your instructions relating to the golden mountain are a little extravagant; none but a paralytic would use so hot a bath; and very few would be willing to destroy their health, and discompose the machine in its most perfect state, to cure a trifling disorder of the hands. I will send you M. Vesou's opinion. Set your mind at rest, therefore, my child, and be assured, I will do whatever I am directed, for your sake. You are now going to Grignan in quest of my letters. I think you must be this evening at Valence; if I calculate right, you have already received my letters directed to Lyons. I noticed the zeal with which you recommended me to M. de la Garde; he behaves in the kindest manner imaginable to me, because he knows you love me, and that he is doing you a pleasure: you are the principal source of pleasure to me. I cannot be long without the company of some of the Grignans; I seek for them, I wish for them, I have occasion for them. The fair Io (madame de Ludre) is at Bouchet; the tranquillity of solitude pleases her more than the court of Paris. Whilst she was upon this little journey, she was obliged to pass a night in the fields: this was occasioned by the breaking down of her carriage, and all the circumstances that attend us in misfortune. The little boy † will give you an account of my health: he has more business on his hands than consoling me: no creature is so busy as a man that is not in love; he plays his part in five or six different places! what slavery! I must repeat it once more, do not scold me for the length of my letter, it is not the work of an evening: and how can I employ myself more to my own satisfaction?

* See the Fable of the Fly and the Mail-Coach.

† M. de Sévigné.

Madame de la Fayette is much better than she was. Madame de Schomberg sends a thousand remembrances to you.

LETTER CCCCXC.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, June 25, 1677.

You are now arrived at Grignan, my child. In the first place let me know, whether the heat, the air, the north-east wind, and the Rhone, have been injurious to you? Next tell me some news of the little marquis and Paulina; I know I shall obtain full information upon all these points before you will receive this letter: but it is impossible not to discover our thoughts when we take up our pen, though we are aware that it is to no purpose. I am satisfied with the kindness shown me by the Grignans; I love them, and their friendship is necessary to me upon other accounts, besides the consideration of their merit. M. de la Garde did not doubt for a moment that it was I, and not madame Gargan, that you recommended to him. I went yesterday with madame de Coulanges to the royal palace; *O, what a dust I raise!* Is not this one of your applications? It is both just and facetious. We were as well received as we could wish; Monsieur was pensive, and spoke only to me, of you and the waters. Madame seemed at first to pay particular attention to me; but as soon as the abbé de Chavigni came in, my star visibly grew dim. In speaking of this abbé, how well the common saying of carrying the cord (possessing some secret charm) applies to him! The duchess de Valentinois is in high favour with Madame; notwithstanding this, she does not discover any superiority of genius, or shine in con-

versation more than her neighbours. I contemplated that chamber and those places of distinction which were formerly so well filled. The princess de Tarente was seated by Madame: they conversed together for a long time: the little de Grignan would improve greatly by hearing them *. I am in perfect health, my dear, and I still say, God grant you were as well as I am! I shall go this evening to Livri with d'Hacqueville; to-morrow we shall dine at Pomponne; madame de Vins waits for us there with the rest of the family. I send you a ballad by M. de Coulanges; I think it droll enough: though the physicians forbid you to sing, I make no doubt but you will disobey them in favour of this whimsical parody.

Io is in the country, and has not been able to support that simple character, which it is indeed very difficult to perform. I will consult with the coadjutor what book should be sent you. I happen at present to be reading Lucian again; who that has read him, can read any other author?

FROM MONSIEUR DE SÉVIGNÉ.

To show you that your brother, the sub-lieutenant †, is a much prettier fellow than you think him, I take the pen from the hands of my dear little mamma, to inform you that I acquit myself admirably of my duty. We mutually take care of each other; we allow each other an honourable liberty; and make use of no silly womanish remedies. "My dear mamma, you seem to be in very

* As these two princesses constantly conversed in the language of their own country, madame de Sévigné means, that her grandson, who was learning the German, would greatly improve by listening to them.

† He had just bought M. de la Fare's place of sub-lieutenant of the dauphin's gens-d'armes, of which he had been ensign before.

good health, I am delighted to see you so well. You slept comfortably last night; how is the head-ache? no vapours? God be praised! you must go out to-day, go to St. Maur, sup with madame de Schomberg, take a walk in the Tuilleries; and as you are so well, I give you full liberty to go where you please. Will you have strawberries, or tea? strawberries are best. Adieu, mamma! my heel is painful. I shall stay with you, if you please, from twelve o'clock till three, and then let affairs go how they will." Thus, my gentle sister, do rational people conduct themselves. The unfortunate *Io* is at Poussat with *matame te Clérempo*, to use her own pronunciation: she passed a whole night forlorn, like another Ariadne. Ah, why was not Bacchus in the way to comfort her, and make her crown shine among the stars? Alas! he was in the height of his glory, and perhaps upon a high mountain, where, according to the order established by God in this world, another labyrinth is to be found. My dear little sister, adieu.

LETTER CCCCXCI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, June 30, 1677.

At length you inform me that you are arrived at Grignan. The pains you have taken to keep our correspondence uninterrupted, is a continual mark of your affection: I can assure you that you are not mistaken in the opinion that I stand in need of this support; indeed no one can be more in want of it. It is true, however, and I too often think so, that your presence would have been of much greater service to me: but your situation was so extraordinary, that the same considerations that determined you to go, made me consent to your depar-

ture, without doing any thing more than stifle my sentiments. It was considered a crime in me to discover any uneasiness with regard to your health: I saw you perishing before my eyes, and was not permitted to shed a tear; it was killing you, it was assassinating you; I was compelled to suppress my grief: I never knew a more cruel or more unprecedented species of torture. If, instead of that restraint, which only increased my affliction, you had owned that you were ill; and if your love for me had been productive of complaisance, and made you evince a real desire to follow the advice of physicians, to take nourishment, to observe a regimen, and to own that repose and the air of Livri would have done you good, this would indeed have comforted me; but your opposition to our sentiments aggravated my grief and anxiety. In the end, my child, we were so circumstanced, that we could not posssibly avoid acting as we did. God explained to us his will by that conduct: but we should endeavour to see whether he will not permit us mutually to reform; and whether, instead of that despair to which you condemned me from a motive of affection, it would not be more natural and more beneficial to give our hearts the liberty they require, and without which it is impossible for us to lead a life of tranquillity. Thus I have declared my mind to you freely once for all; I shall mention the subject no more; but let us each reflect upon the past, that, whenever it pleases God to bring us together again, we may carefully avoid falling into the same errors. The relief which you have found in the fatigues of so long a journey, sufficiently proves the necessity you are under of laying aside restraint. Extraordinary remedies are necessary for persons of an extraordinary character; physicians would never have dreamed of such a one as that I have just mentioned:

God grant it may continue to produce the same good effect, and that the air of Grignan may not prove injurious to you! I could not avoid writing to you in this manner, in order to relieve my heart, and intimate to you, that we must endeavour, when next we meet, not to give any one an opportunity of paying us the wretched compliment of saying very civilly, that to keep quite well, we should never see one another again. I am astonished at the patience that can bear so cruel a thought.

You brought the tears into my eyes in speaking of your little boy. Alas, poor child; who can bear to see him in such a situation! I do not retract what I always thought of him; but am of opinion that, even from affection, we ought to wish him already in a happier world. Paulina appears to me worthy of being made your play-thing; her resemblance even will not displease you, at least, I hope it will not. That little quadrangular nose is a feature you cannot possibly dislike to find at Grignan *. It seems to me somewhat odd, that the noses of the Grignan family should admit no shape but this, and should be altogether averse to a nose like yours, which might have been sooner formed; but they dreaded extremes, though they did not care about a trifling modification. The little marquis is a very pretty fellow; you should not be at all uneasy at his not being altered for the better. Talk to me a great deal about the persons you associate with, and the amusements they afford you. I returned last Sunday from Livri. I have seen neither the coadjutor, nor any of the Grignan family, since I have been here. I leave La Garde to inform you of the news. All things ap-

* This alludes to madame de Sévigné's nose, which inclined to the square.

pear to me to be upon the old footing. *Io* is at full liberty in the meadows, and free from the observation of any Argus. Juno thunders and triumphs. Corbinelli is returning *. I shall go to Livri two days hence to receive him. The cardinal is as fond of him as we are; the fat abbé has shown me some droll letters they are writing to you. In short, they have been turning round their wits till the mind is giddy. His eminence was highly delighted with the originality of our friend. Adieu, my beloved child; continue to love me with unabated affection; give me an account of the state you are in, in as few words as possible, for I would advise you by all means to avoid prolixity. For my part, I have no other employment but writing to you, and I resume a letter at several different times. I do not apprehend that madame de Coulanges will go to Lyons; she has too much business upon her hands here. "O, what a dust I raise!" How comes it that you have a sister, and that it is not madame de Rochbonne? I could wish you had the same sentiments for one as for the other; yet I grant it is not exactly the same thing.

LETTER CCCCXCII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday morning, July 2, 1677.

I AM going directly to Livri to hear mass. Corbinelli will arrive to-day or to-morrow: I take pleasure in waiting for him upon the high road of Chalons, and dragging him out of his coach at the end of the avenue, to carry him home, and make him spend a day with us:

* From Commerci, where he had been to see cardinal de Retz.

we shall have a good deal of conversation, and I will send you an account of it. I shall return on Sunday next; for a little affair, in which I constantly hope to be successful, still prevents me from settling at Livri: to tell you the truth, it is that butterfly I mentioned to my son; which, at the moment you think it within your reach, eludes your grasp. I meet with nothing but opposition to all my desires, whether of great or little importance. If I did not look up to Providence, I should lose all patience. I leave a servant to bring me my letters. Ah! my child, I support existence during all other days, merely in expectation of that on which they arrive; and the moral reflections with which they abound, are always seasonable, when I see how transitory are all human affairs.

Io returned to Versailles immediately after Monsieur; this intelligence does not make the least noise. Quanto and her friend are longer together, and upon more affectionate terms, than they ever were: the ardour of the first years they passed together still subsists, and all restraint is banished, to excite a belief that no empire was ever more firmly established. I have seen persons who are of opinion, that, instead of going to Bouchet when Monsieur is at Paris, and returning to court when he returns, it would be much better to stay at Paris with Monsieur, and go to the country when he returns to Versailles *.

Madame de Coulanges has discontinued her visits to Lyons; her sister is going in her stead. The good-natured Marbeuf has just taken her leave of me; she expresses the highest affection for you, and sends you a thousand remembrances. My son goes frequently to

* This relates to madame de Ludre, attached to the family of Monsieur, as lady in waiting to Madame, who appeared to always follow the king.

Lisle; he is extremely well received there. If you were but once happy, all would be well. Adieu, my dearest child; I wait with impatience to hear of your health, and how the world goes at Grignan. Your little boy gives me great concern. Follow our advice with regard to the timidity of the eldest; if you teaze him, you will disconcert him in such a way that he will never recover; this is an affair of the highest importance. The duke desired me yesterday to give you his compliments, and to tell you that it was owing to his orders that you found the roads so bad; but that you shall, at your return, find them strewed with flowers. My dear child, I now take my leave of you; I love you with uncommon affection; and you return it in a manner which will not fail to make it last. If you wish me to enjoy my health, take care of your own, and pay particular attention to the effect which the air of Grignan has upon you; if it has not a good effect, it must certainly have a bad one.

LETTER CCCCXCIII.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Saturday, July 3, 1677.

Alas, how grieved I am at the death of your poor child *! it is impossible not to be affected at it. Not that I was ever of opinion he could live: the description you gave convinced me that his case was desperate. But, it is a great loss to you, who had lost two boys before: God preserve to you the only one that remains! He discovers an admirable disposition; I am much better pleased with sound sense and just reasoning, at his

* The child that was born in February 1676.

age, than with the vivacity of those who turn out fools at twenty. Be satisfied with him, therefore; lead him like a horse that has a tender mouth, and remember what I told you respecting his bashfulness: this advice comes from persons much wiser than myself; and I am sure it is good. With regard to Paulina, I have one word to say to you; from your description of her she may, perhaps, in time, become as handsome as yourself; when a child, you were exactly like her: God grant she may not resemble me in having a heart so susceptible of tenderness! I see plainly that you love her, that she is amiable, and that she amuses you. I wish I could embrace her, and recognise that face again *which I have seen somewhere.*

I have been here ever since yesterday morning. My plan was to wait for Corbinelli as he passed, and secure him at the end of the avenue, to amuse myself with his conversation till to-morrow. We took all possible care to accomplish this: we even sent to Claie; but it seems he had passed by, half an hour before. I shall go to see him at Paris to-morrow, and will write you an account of his journey, for I shall not finish this letter till Wednesday. O my dear child, how I wish for you on such nights as these! the air is so mild and refreshing! the tranquillity, and silence, are so profound! I wish I could communicate these advantages to you, and that your north-east wind was banished. You tell me I am uneasy at your being so thin; I acknowledge it; it but too plainly indicates your ill state of health. Your natural constitution inclines to plumpness; if God has not, as you say, punished you for destroying so fine a state of health, and so well organised a frame: such attempts are indeed occasioned by a sort of phrensy, and God is just when he punishes them. You endeavour to persuade me that you are by nature hard-

hearted, in order to console me with regard to the loss of your child; I know not, my dear, whence you have derived that hardness of heart, which acts only upon yourself; for with respect to me, and all you ought to love, you are but too sensible, too tender: this is your great misfortune; it is this that undermines your constitution, and wastes you away; take from us, my child, a part of this tenderness, and bestow it on yourself; consider yourself as a person of some consequence; we shall be obliged to you for every mark of affection you give us in this way. I am surprised that the little marquis and his sister should express no concern at the death of their little brother; to what can their indifference be owing? not to your example most assuredly.

My son goes from hence at the end of this month; his departure is indispensably necesary. The king has again expressed himself as if he had a persuasion that Sévigné had copied the bad air of the subaltern officers of the company *. On the other hand, M. de la Trousse writes to him thus: "Come, come, and hobble amongst us." He must go, so there is an end of his taking the waters. I shall not, however, neglect going to Vichi; we will talk about this; it will be a journey of pure precaution, for I am in perfect health, and not at all uneasy about my hands. Madame de Marbeuf had hers for two years in the same state as mine, yet she recovered at last. Your brother is sadly addicted to falling in love: I am surprised at the trouble he gives himself for nothing, really nothing. He was yesterday found by a husband in private conversation with his wife. The husband seemed not at all pleased at the discovery; he spoke very roughly to his wife, and the

* The company of the dauphin's gens-d'armes.

alarm was spread about every where when I set out yesterday. I will write to you from Paris, to let you know the conclusion of this affair. You will easily perceive that the length of this letter is owing to the abuse I make of the permission I have to prate at Livri, where I am alone, and have no sort of business upon my hands. I ought to condole with you upon the death of your child; but when I reflect that he is now an angel in the presence of God, I cannot help thinking it is improper to make use of the words grief and affliction; Christians should be rejoiced at it, if they really have the principles of the religion they profess.

Paris, Wednesday, July 7.

Take notice, my dear child, that this letter was begun three days ago; and if it appears immoderately long, it is because it was written at leisure: add to this, that the paper, and my writing, make it appear still longer than it is; there is more in one sheet of yours than in six of mine: do not, therefore, consider this as an example, nor revenge yourself upon yourself, that is, upon me. I have had a great deal of conversation with Corbinelli: he is charmed with the cardinal; he said he never met with so noble and exalted a mind; those of the ancient Romans approached the nearest to his. You are tenderly beloved by him, and I am now more certain than ever, that he has not for a moment been deficient in friendship for you; some misfortunes we must expect, and this is the effect of original sin. It would require a volume to give you a full detail of all the wonders he has related to me.

The baron has set all to rights by his address: he knows as much of this quality as his masters, and more; for no one ever surpassed him in the practice of indifference; he plays it so naturally, and truth imitates

probability so well, that no jealousy or suspicion can be proof against such artful conduct. You would have laughed heartily, if you had known the whole of this adventure. I doubt not that you guess the name of the husband; happen what will, the wife is going to take up her abode in your neighbourhood. Poor Isis did not go to Versailles; I was misinformed; she remained all the time in her solitude, and so she will during the journey to Villers Coterets, for which place Monsieur and Madame are just going to set out. You cannot sufficiently lament, or sufficiently admire, the unhappy fate of this young creature: whenever a certain person (madame de Montespan) speaks of her, she calls her *that rag*. The event justifies every thing.

I have seen the abbé de Vergne: the conversation turned again upon the state of my soul; he told me he would not take charge of me upon any other conditions, than confining me to my chamber, and directing me in exercises of piety, without suffering me to read, write, or hear, a single word. He is very amiable, and the most entertaining companion in the world; you may take it for granted that you were not forgotten in the conversation. I dined with M. de la Garde; he is beloved by all who know him well. He goes to see you, takes you to his house, lodges you: in short, what does he not do? My thoughts are entirely taken up with putting our great house in order; we shall be unsettled till that is done; and you are very sensible what a great mortification it will be to me, not to be in the same house with you: but we must, in every thing, submit to the will of Providence. In your present leisure, make it your chief study to preserve your health; dwell not much upon the melancholy thought of your son's death; it will prey upon you like a devouring dragon, if you indulge it: you say very well, that, for the

honour of Christianity, we should not lament the happiness of these little angels. At present the cardinal enjoys health: however, he is sometimes threatened with the gout; it seems to have a disposition to attack him again. Such is the friendship I bear this worthy cardinal, that I should be inconsolable were you to refuse him yours: think not that he is indifferent about it.

LETTER CCCCXCIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, July 9, 1677.

You shall not say to-day, that I have set you a bad example, and that you will kill yourself with the same sword. I have lately written you huge unwieldy letters, which were small notwithstanding; I hope this short one, however, will be long. I am not naturally disposed to terrify you; add to this, my dear child, that I have not yet received your letters; but I expect them either this evening, or to-morrow; and the dearth of news is another reason. M. de la Garde will tell you all he knows. I often talk of getting a tutor for the little marquis; and am generally answered, that it is difficult to find a person calculated for the office. I am more than ever alarmed at disorders which dry up the juices; poor madame de la Fayette is so threatened with one, that she thinks of nothing but ending her life like my aunt: she is very much reduced since your departure; she has not yet recovered from her colic; she still takes broths, and even after this slight nourishment she is greatly agitated, and her fever increases, as if she had eaten or drunk to excess. Her physicians say, that this is a serious affair, and that if she goes on thus, she may

linger away miserably till the wick of life is burnt out. This information makes me uneasy; I pity her, because I love her, and I pity all those whose blood is so extremely subtle. It seems to me not necessary to consume the whole machine. When we have a great regard for a person, it is not ridiculous to wish their blood, about which we are particularly interested, to become sedate and cool; but you, my dear child, should endeavour to thicken yours, and avoid, as much as possible, thinking of the poor little boy you have lost. I very much fear that, notwithstanding all your fine harangues, you will make dragons of this event; have compassion upon yourself, my beloved child, and upon me. I hope you will not think this letter too long. Why do not those who have told us that nothing can be so good for us both as to be at the distance of two hundred leagues from each other, add, that we should likewise discontinue our correspondence? I wish they would.

LETTER CCCCXCV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, July 14, 1677.

You have, as it were, ceased to love me, my poor child, by the advice of your physician; were we to form an opinion of this advice from your state of health, we should be apt to conclude, that this remedy bears a strong resemblance to the good man's powder; and that taking it is like betting double or quits. I will not tell you what effect the diminution of a friendship I so much value would have upon me; but I cannot conceal from you the pleasure I take in hearing that you both sleep and eat. If you would give me a real proof of the friendship you formerly bore me, you

would think of drinking cow's milk; this would refresh you, and increase your blood, which would circulate as gently as another's, and would restore you to that state in which I once saw you. What joy would this give me, my child! and under what an obligation would it lay me! How secure will my health and life be, when you have relieved me from the uneasiness which your illness makes me suffer! I shall say no more to you at present; I shall soon see whether you love me or not. I am very glad you are satisfied with your physician d'Amonio; if you had had him, he would doubtless have preserved the life of your son; he should have taken cooling remedies; I think his physician discovered great ignorance, in prescribing heating ones: but the grand difficulty was, to alter what Providence had decreed concerning this poor child. This is one of the afflictions which require us to submit, without murmuring, to what is ordained for us. It is true, indeed, I never thought he could live; how could you imagine, that a child, who had no teeth, and could not hold himself upright, at eighteen months old, should escape? I am not so skilful as madame du Pui-du-Fou, but I did not think it was possible for him to live with such symptoms: I am very well aware of the magnitude of this third loss, and I feel the whole weight of it. Paulina gives me the highest delight. I spoke to the handsome abbé not long ago about a preceptor, who is known to M. de la Mousse; they will see him, and tell you their opinion of him; they think the marquis too young to begin; I told them, that, though young in years, he was not young in understanding. The handsome abbé and I laughed till we almost cried, at your history of the little Magdalen; I am surprised that you should say you do not know how to tell a story, and that it is my talent. I assure you, you have given us the his-

tory of the little Magdalen's devotions with so much humour, that this story is in nothing inferior to that of the hermitess, with which I have been charmed. I find that hermits make a great figure in Provence. The *worthy* got the hiccups by listening to the tale, and your brother will let you know his opinion of it.

FROM MONSIEUR DE SÉVIGNÉ.

I OUGHT to say nothing to you, since you never trouble your head about me. You are so well pleased at being fat again, that you forget every thing you do not see. You no longer love my mother; and I, in order to be revenged, love you as little as you love her. We are all greatly edified by the devotion of the little Magdalen; you see plainly, that it is only the fervour of a novice; beware to what the excess of her zeal may hurry her. I wish our little Mary may turn out such another; but I wish, at the same time, she may choose me for her hermit. I could act the hermit admirably: two drops of water would not be more like; or, if any thing were wanting, I could get a frock so made, that I could hide my head in it upon occasion, which would be of great service to me. M. de Meurles' greyhound, though broken-backed, became one of the finest sporting-dogs in the province; and why should not I, by means of such a secret, become as clever a fellow as a hermit? Adieu, my dearest sister! I passionately love Paulina; I would gladly make her my heiress, if I die without marrying.

I have twice seen the pretty infanta at her own house; she is very handsome, very sprightly; I think I amuse her. I had the good fortune to make the grandmother laugh heartily; she told me, that she thought me a clever fellow: the young lady and I seem to

understand one another sufficiently, and we sometimes steal a glance at each other: this affair depends entirely upon Providence. *Si Deus est pro nobis, quis contra nos?* Faith, *Nemo, Domine!* Is not your good brother in the right?

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

It is easy to see my son reads good books. You would afford us pleasure, by giving us that sprightly girl, that little infanta, who is, at present, never out of her mother's sight: if we do not bring about the marriage now, we never shall; we were never so good, but we may perhaps grow worse. I shall go to Livri for a short time, to breathe the clear air: Madame de la Fayette is so very ill, that I am ashamed to leave her for my pleasures; I shall go, however, but I shall constantly be backwards and forwards till my journey to Vichi.

I resume my letter in this place, consequently its length ought not to terrify you. I am impatient for yours; my friends at the post-office do nothing properly. I am very well pleased with M. de la Garde; he soon gains upon one's affection; he is worthy of esteem upon many accounts; his conduct convinces me that he thinks you love me, and his approbation of your taste gives me the highest satisfaction. He thinks of nothing now but preparing for his departure; I shall be very glad when he and the handsome abbé are with you; you may hold your family-council together: on my part, I think I shall set out for Livri to-morrow. Our little affair is almost finished; instead of being money to subsist on, it is money for having subsisted: La Garde will inform you of the charms of the festival of Sceaux.

There are two young daughters of l'Islebonne, that are very pretty: their mother told madame de Coulanges yesterday, that she would bring them to her, to have her opinion of them before she went to Versailles. "O what a dust I raise!" Do you not think a mother who is young enough to be loved, who has a daughter still more lovely, and who thinks she herself is the object of attraction, may well say, "O what a dust I raise!" I think, if I was not so wise as I am, I might have been such a mother: they are rich who know this fable.

It was our earnest desire, that you should speak to the intendant. I said the other day to M. de Pomponne, If I had employed M. de M**** to exaggerate the merit of my son, he would have been thought admirably qualified; my style is by no means well calculated to impose. My chief care, at present, is to repair our mansion-house; madame de Guénégaud wishes it still more ardently; but I tremble when I think that it is an affair which depends entirely upon the pleasure of M. de Colbert; so that, if I could find any other expedient, I would avail myself of it. If we must always be at a distance from each other, it will be a great grief to me; for at this rate we see and know nothing of each other; we travel and fatigue ourselves: I earnestly pray that Providence may have compassion upon us. However, the three pavilions give me some consolation; if it were not for them, how could we possibly accommodate the mesdemoiselles de Grignan †?

† Louisa Catharine, and Frances Julia d'Adhémar de Monteil, the daughters of Angelica Clara d'Angennes, his first wife.

Louisa Catharine lived in celibacy, and gained the reputation of extraordinary piety.

Frances Julia (mademoiselle d'Alerac) married M. de Vibraye, lieutenant-general of the king's army in the year 1689.

and if you are to be in the clouds, I shall be very glad to be there too. I leave this letter again, till I have received yours. I have lately meditated upon a certain subject: but I say nothing about it, because it will look as if I wished to ape Brancas: now I mention Brancas, I must not omit telling you, that he is at present confined with his daughter, who has the small-pox. The princess is at Versailles.

I have at length, my dear child, received yours of the 7th; your correspondence is divine, but surely, surely, you write too much. I am well aware, that as you are now at a distance from all your friends, you have many to write to; but, my dear child, I would rather you should neglect us all; take care how you give way to the vivacity of your genius and imagination. You are inexhaustible, and your letters all flow from the fountain-head; this is obvious, and the pleasure of reading them is inconceivable. This manner of writing the Spaniards call *disembueltado** (free); the term pleases me highly: let us, however, practise self-denial; be you satisfied with writing less; and let us be satisfied with hearing from you less frequently. Corbinelli is delighted with what you say of his metaphysics; he is returned from Commerci a more profound philosopher than ever. He has highly entertained the cardinal; we are always talking of him, and every thing he says increases our friendship for his eminence. My son cannot possibly avoid going to the army: he must defer taking the waters till another opportunity. I shall go with the abbé to Bourbilly: Guitaut will conduct me back, within a day's journey of Nevers. By that time, the roads will be good. I shall have the

* In Italian *disinvolto*, of which the French word *degagé* is an imperfect translation.

worthy and my physician with me, therefore be under no concern. I am glad you are offended, as I am, with the fine compliment that is paid us: let us alter our manner; I agree to it: but let us not have recourse to the dreadful remedy of a long absence; such a remedy would, in the end, make us want no other remedies. It is true, I am perplexed about a house; but what comforts me is, that Bagnole and M. de la Trousse are in as great perplexity as myself. I do not approve of your sending Paulina to your sister-in-law*, I never liked those convents; you are both wise and prudent. If your son is strong and healthy, a country education is the fittest for him; but if he is weak and delicate, I have heard Brayer and Bourdelot advance, that an attempt to make such children robust, generally puts an end to their lives. Do not forget what I told you with regard to his timidity. There never was finer weather than we have here at present; Provence is now free from the north-east wind, and from excessive heat. Adieu, my dear child, till Friday next. I embrace you with my whole heart; but this expression seems too weak to convey an adequate idea of my feelings; what can I do?

LETTER CCCCXCVI.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Friday, July 16, 1677.

I ARRIVED here yesterday evening, my dear child; the weather is wonderfully fine; I am quite alone, and enjoy a repose, a silence, a leisure, which gives me the

* Mary Adhémar de Monteil, a nun of the convent of Aubenas, and sister of M. de Grignan.

highest delight. Will you not allow me to amuse myself by chatting with you a little? I have no society, at present, but you: when I have written to Provence, I have nothing more to do: you cannot surely call a letter once a week to madame de Lavardin, a correspondence. Letters of business are neither long nor frequent. But you, my child, have ten or twelve correspondents, by all of whom you are idolised, and these I have heard you reckon over and over. The subject of all their letters is the same, and yet it requires twelve to answer them: thus it happens every week, and thus are you plagued and tormented, whilst they all assure you, that they do not require an answer, but merely three or four lines, to inform them of your health. This is the language of them all, and of me among the rest; in short, we are all together too hard for you, but we behave with all the address and politeness of the man in the play, who beats another with an air of complaisance, asking his pardon all the while, and saying with the utmost respect, I am very sorry, sir, but you will have it so*. The application is so just, and so easily made, that I think it unnecessary to point it out.

Wednesday evening, after I had written to you, I was invited in the kindest manner possible to sup at Gourville's, with madame de Schomberg, madame de Frontenac, madame de Coulanges, the duke, M. de la Rochefoucault, Barillon, Briole, Coulanges, Sévigné: the master of the house received us in a place newly erected; it was a garden of the hôtel de Condé; there were water-works, bowers, terrasses, six hautboys in one corner, six violins in another, the most melodious flutes; a supper which seemed to be prepared by enchantment, an admirable base-viol, and a resplendent moon, which

* See Molière's Comedy of the Forced Marriage.

witnessed all our pleasures. If you had not an antipathy to all sorts of entertainments, you would have regretted not being of the party. It is true, indeed, we might have complained of the same misfortune which you noticed when you were there, and which will always happen upon such occasions; that is to say, that a sort of tacit condition is entered into, that a word shall not be spoken. Barillon, Sévigné, and I, could not help laughing, for your observation immediately occurred to us. The next day, which was Thursday, I went to court, and exerted myself so well, that, as the good abbé says, I obtained a slight injustice, after having suffered so many great ones, by receiving two hundred louis-d'ors, in part of payment of seven hundred, which I ought to have had eight months ago, and which, they tell me, I shall receive in the winter. After this wretched expedition, I came here in the evening to take a little rest, and am determined to stay till the eighth of next month, when I must prepare for Burgundy and Vichi. Perhaps I may sometimes go and dine at Paris. Madame de la Fayette is much better. To-morrow I shall go to Pomponne; the great d'Hacqueville has been there since yesterday; I shall bring him back with me. Your brother visits the fair one, and entertains her highly; she is naturally of a very gay disposition; the mother and grandmother receive him well. Corbinelli will come to me here; he highly approves what you wrote to me on metaphysics, and admires your penetration in comprehending its meaning so easily. It is true, indeed, that most metaphysicians involve themselves in inextricable difficulties, as well with regard to predestination, as liberty. Corbinelli decides more boldly than any of them; but the most cautious bring themselves off with an *altitudo,* or else force their

adversaries to silence, as our cardinal does. I never met with more absurdities than in the 26th article of the last volume of the Moral Essays, in the discourse upon tempting God. When teachers are humble, when their morals are correct, and nothing is intended but to baffle false arguments, there is no great harm done, for if they would be silent, we should say nothing: but when they are obstinately bent upon establishing their maxims; when they translate St. Augustin, for fear we should be ignorant of his meaning; when they endeavour to promulgate the most rigid doctrines imaginable; and then conclude, like father Bauni, lest they should lose their right of scolding; this puts me out of all patience, and I cannot avoid doing like Corbinelli. May I die if I do not prefer the Jesuits! they are, at least, consistent and uniform in their doctrine, as well as in their morality. Our brethren make eloquent discourses, but draw absurd conclusions; they are not sincere; at last, you see, I have dipped into Escobar. You may easily perceive, my child, that I jest and divert myself.

I left Beaulieu with M. de la Garde's copyist; he never loses sight of my original. It was not without great difficulty that I complied with M. de la Garde's request: you will see what a daub it is. I hope the last touches will be better; but yesterday it looked shockingly. This is the effect of so earnest a desire to have a copy of that beautiful portrait of madame de Grignan, and which it would have been cruel in me to refuse. Well, I did not refuse; but I rejoice that I never before met with so horrid a profanation of my daughter's face. This painter is a young man from Tournay, to whom M. de la Garde pays three guineas a month; his intention, at first, was to employ him in painting screens, and now he is to do no less than copy

Mignard. These projects are a little unreasonable: but silence; for I have a great regard for the person in question.

I wish, my dear child, that you had a tutor for your son; it is a pity his mind should be left uncultivated. I doubt whether he is yet of an age to eat all sorts of food promiscuously; we should examine whether children are strong and robust, before we give them strong meats; otherwise we run the hazard of injuring their stomachs, which is of great consequence. My son stays behind to take leave of his friends; he will then come to me here; he must afterwards join the army, and after that he may go and drink the waters. An officer, named M. D****, has lately been cashiered for absenting himself: I know the answer you will make, but this instance sufficiently shows the severity of military discipline. Adieu, my dear child; be comforted for the loss of your son; nobody is to blame concerning him. His death was occasioned by teething, and not by a defluxion upon the lungs: when children have not strength sufficient to force out the teeth at a proper time, they are never able to bear the necessary motion to make them all come at once: I talk learnedly. You know the answer of Sully's green bed to M. de Coulanges, made by Guillerague; it is droll enough: madame de Thianges repeated it to the king, who sings it; it was said at first, that he had ruined himself by it; but it is not true, it will perhaps make his fortune. If this discourse does not come from a green mind, it comes from a green head, which is the same, and the colour of the thing cannot be disputed.

LETTER CCCCXCVII.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Monday, July 19, 1677.

I WENT on Saturday to Pomponne; I there found the whole family; and, besides the rest, a brother of M. de Pomponne's, who had lived in solitude three years longer than M. d'Andilly. His merit and genius, which are but little thought of here, would be the wonder of any other family. The great d'Hacqueville was there too; he will not return to Paris till he accompanies madame de Vins thither; I expect them all to dine with me to-morrow. There was a great deal of mirth about the copy of your picture, which one of my footmen had represented as extremely ridiculous. They put me to the utmost confusion, when they proposed to have it done by a better hand; the battery was so strong against me, that I know not how I shall get clear of this scrape. This is just what I feared: thus all my desires are crossed: this is by no means one of the greatest; but it is sufficient to convince me that I must not flatter myself with the hope of being gratified either in things of great or little importance. In the evening I had intended to return and sleep here; but there arose such a violent storm, that I must have been out of my senses to have exposed myself to it, except in a case of necessity. We slept, therefore, at Pomponne, and dined there the next day, that is, yesterday. I there received a letter from you; and though it is only Monday, and this will not go till Wednesday, I already begin to converse with you. I am persuaded that none of the faculty would object to my amusing myself in

this manner, considering the pleasure which it gives me in my present state of indolence.

You tell me great things of your health; you sleep, you eat, you are calm; you have no duty upon your hands, no visits, no mother to importune you with her love; you have forgotten that article of comfort, and it is the most important of all. In short, my child, I was not allowed to be uneasy about the state you were in; all your friends were alarmed, but I must be unmoved! I was wrong, to fear that the air of Provence might make you still worse. You neither slept nor ate; and seeing you disappear from my sight, was to be considered as a trifle unworthy of my attention! Ah, my child! when I saw you in health, was I uneasy about the future? was ever such an apprehension the subject of my thoughts? But I saw you, I thought, seized with a disorder dangerous to young persons; and instead of endeavouring to comfort me in a way calculated to restore you to your former health, they speak of nothing but your absence; it is I that kill you, it is I that am the cause of all your sufferings. When I reflect with what caution I concealed my fears, and that, notwithstanding, the little that escaped me had so alarming an effect, I take it for granted that I am no longer to love you; things so monstrous and contradictory are required of me, that, having no longer the hope of effecting them, nothing but the recovery of your health can extricate me from this perplexity. But, thank God! the air and tranquillity of Grignan have worked this miracle, and the joy I feel is proportioned to my affection for you. M. de Grignan has gained his cause, and would be as much afraid of seeing me with you, as he loves your life: I can easily guess at your jests and pleasantries upon this occasion.

You seem to play a sure game with sterling money; you are in good health, you tell me; you spend the time merrily with your husband; how can false coin be made of such excellent metal? I say nothing of the measures you have taken for the ensuing winter: I am well aware that M. de Grignan must make the best use he can of the little time that is left him; M. de Vendome is at his heels*: you will doubtless conduct yourselves according to your own views, and you cannot take a false step. For my part, if you were in sufficient health to be able to bear my presence, and my son and the good abbé were willing to pass the winter in Provence, it would give me pleasure, and I would not desire a more agreeable abode. You know how happy I was there; and what indeed have I to wish or regret in the world, when I am with you, and you enjoy health? I will endeavour to prevail upon the good abbé, and leave Providence to decide. To show you that I took care to deliver your letter to Corbinelli, here is his answer.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI.

No, madam, I will not scold your mother; she does not deserve it, but you do. How could it enter your brain that she wishes you to be as fat as madame de Castelnau? Is there no medium between your extreme thinness and a lump of tallow? You run into extremes. You resemble a certain person whom a devout bishop refused to ordain. "What, then, would you have me do, sir?" answered he: "would you have me rob

* M. de Vendome was governor of Provence; and when he arrived there, M. de Grignan constantly set out for Grignan, or for court.

upon the highway?" Should a prodigy of genius like you reason in this manner? Then, again, is it fair jesting, to occasion a dispute between M. de Grignan and madame de Sévigné? You give me an excellent idea of your cascade of fears, the reverberation of which killed you all three. This revolution may be fatal, but it is you who occasion it; prevent it, and all will be well. You fancy your mother is indisposed; she is not so, she is in good health. She is not afraid of being with child, but she is afraid of growing too fat. Do you fear the one, and wish to grow fatter. I am not satisfied with you; I think you unreasonable; I am ashamed of being your master. If the great Descartes knew this, he would prevent your soul from being green, and you would be mortified at its being black, or of any other colour. I saw at Commerci a prodigy of merit and virtue; this should be a motive to you, to be as careful of your health, as you were formerly negligent of it, when you gave me the mock title of plenipotentiary. Adieu, madam; I am, &c.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Thus he writes to you; you see plainly, that I neither add to, nor retrench from, his letter. I talked a great deal about a tutor to a certain inhabitant of Port-Royal; he knows of none: if any offers in his cell, he will not fail to give me notice; I should be glad to see this little marquis, and should be delighted to stroke the plump cheeks of Paulina; how pretty I think her! I am sure she will be very like you; flaxen hair, which curls naturally, is a great beauty; love her, love her, my child; you have loved your mother long enough: to continue to love me now, would only be the cause of vexation

to you; what are you afraid of? Restrain your inclinations no longer, transfer your affection to her; I am convinced you will derive great pleasure from thence. La Bagnols * set out to-day. I wrote to my son to desire him, if he has not died of grief, to come and dine with the whole family of the Pomponnes. He will be better off than M. de Grignan, who thinks himself quite abandoned, because he had but three mistresses at Aix, all of whom proved false to him: it is impossible to be too well provided with them; he that has but three, has none; I hear all he has to say upon that subject. My son is thoroughly convinced of this truth; I make no doubt but he has more than six left; and I would wager that none of them will die of a malignant fever, he has chosen them so well of late. You see I commit all sorts of trifles to paper as well as you.

I am glad to find that the parliament of Aix has not proved ungrateful to M. de Grignan; I remember well how he was received the year I was there. With regard to the first president, if they are satisfied when they seal their letters, they change their opinion before the post arrives at Lyons. But this is certain, that the whole province has a great affection and respect for M. de Grignan. You will, at least, my dear child, permit me to embrace you in imagination. I shall not finish this letter till Wednesday.

Wednesday, July 21.

The whole family of the Pomponnes dined with us yesterday. My son came here from Paris; we spent the day very pleasantly. Madame de Vins, and d'Hacqueville, staid with us; they will not set out till this

* The sister of madame de Coulanges.

evening. We had a great deal of conversation respecting Isis; it is impossible to conjecture in what manner her unhappy adventure will terminate.

Terminez mes tourmens, puissant Maître du monde *.

If she could address this prayer to the god, and he would vouchsafe to hear it, it would be an apotheosis for her. Your conjecture was very just, the *fly* † cannot yet quit the court; when we have certain engagements there, we are not free. Bagnols is departed, La Mousse is gone with her: if you could prevail upon him to go to Grignan, to instruct the young marquis a little, it would be happy for you, and he would think himself happy in the visit.

LETTER CCCCXCVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Wednesday evening, July 21, 1677.

Love Paulina, love Paulina, my child! indulge yourself in that amusement; do not destroy your peace of mind by depriving yourself of her; what are you afraid of? You may still send her to a convent for a few years, when you think it necessary. Enjoy maternal affection for a while; it is exquisite when it springs from the heart, and the choice falls upon an amiable object. Dear Paulina! methinks I see her here; she will resemble you, notwithstanding she bears the mark of the workman. It is true, this nose is a strange affair; but it will improve, and I will answer for it, she will be handsome.

* "Terminate my sufferings, mighty Master of the world."—See the opera of Isis, act V. scene I.

† Madame de Coulanges.

Madame de Vins is still here: she is now in my closet, engaged in conversation with d'Hacqueville and my son. His heel is still so bad, that he may perhaps go to Bourbon when I go to Vichi. Be under no concern about this journey; and since it is not the will of Heaven that I should enjoy the charms of your society, we must yield obedience to his will: it is a bitter evil, but it must be endured; we are the weakest, and to attempt resistance is vain. I should be too happy if your friendship was clothed in all its realities; it is still extremely dear to me, though divested of the charms and pleasures which your presence and company bestow upon it. My son and I will answer all you have said on the subject of epic poetry. The contempt I know he has for Eneas, makes me apprehensive he will be of your opinion. Yet all the great wits have a taste for every thing written by the ancients.

You will soon have La Garde and the handsome abbé with you. There was much said here of our views with regard to the little *intendante:* madame de Vins assures me, that all depends upon her father, and that, when the ball comes to them, they will do wonders. We thought proper, that we might not be obliged to wait, to send you an account of my son's fortune, and of his expectations, that you may show it to the intendant in confidence, that we may know his pleasure, without suffering the delays and explanations which must be endured, if you do not represent it fairly to him; so fairly that no cause might be left to doubt its truth, as is generally done; for, should he suspect any exaggeration, the whole treaty is at an end. Our style is so simple, and so different from that of marriage-contracts in general, that, unless those with whom we treat do us the honour to believe us implicitly, we never conclude any thing; it is true, they are at liberty

to make inquiries, and in this frankness and simplicity ought to find their account. In short, my child, we earnestly recommend this affair to you, and wish you to obtain a direct answer, yes or no; that we may not lose time about a visionary project. As I intend writing to you again on Friday, I shall now return to my company.

LETTER CCCCXCIX.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Friday, July 23, 1677.

The baron is here, and does not let me rest a moment, with such rapidity does he hurry me on in the studies we have undertaken together: Don Quixote, Lucian, and the little Letters *, furnish our chief amusement. I wish, with all my heart, my child, that you could see with what an air, and in what a tone, he acquits himself in reading the last: they acquire a new value in passing through his hands; there is something exquisite in his manner, both in the serious and the gay; this amusement would entertain you I think full as well as the indefectibility of matter. I work, while he reads; and we are so commodiously situated for a walk, that we are continually going into the garden, and returning.

I think I shall go to Paris for an instant, and bring back Corbinelli with me: but I shall quit this quiet and peaceable desert, and set out the 16th of August for Burgundy and Vichi. Be under no concern about my taking the waters: as it is not the will of God that I should be there with you, we must think of nothing but

* The Provincial Letters of Pascal.

submission to his decrees. I endeavour to console myself by the consideration that you sleep, eat, are calm, are no longer preyed upon by a thousand uneasy thoughts, that your beautiful face recovers its attractive charms, and that your lungs are not wasting away in a consumption; it is in these changes that I hope to find an alleviation of what I suffer by being deprived of your company; when the hope of seeing you is added to these thoughts, it will be doubly welcome, and will hold its place among them admirably. I suppose M. de Grignan is with you; I heartily congratulate him upon his good success; I know how he is received in Provence, and am not at all surprised at his being so highly beloved. I recommend Paulina to his care, and entreat him to defend her against your philosophy. Do not deprive yourself of so agreeable an amusement; alas! the choice of our pleasures is not often in our power. When one that is innocent and natural falls in our way, I think we should not be so cruel to ourselves as to let it escape us. I must therefore sing once more, "Love, love Paulina, &c." *

We shall wait at St. Remi, to know what madame de Guénégaud will do to her house; if she has done nothing by that time, we shall take proper measures ourselves, and look out for one against Christmas: it will indeed give me great pain to lose the hope of living under the same roof with you; perhaps we may discover the meaning of all this when we least expect it. I suppose M. de la Garde will shortly set out; I shall take my leave of him at Paris; this will be an addition to your society. M. de Charost has written to me, that he might have an opportunity of speaking of you; he pays you a thousand compliments.

* Alluding to a verse in the opera of Theseus.

I believe, my dear, we shall agree pretty well in our opinions of epic poetry; the tinsel of Tasso * has charmed me. I fancy, however, you will be friends with Virgil: Corbinelli has made me admire him; in reading him you should have some such commentator, to accompany you. I am going to begin the Schism of the Greeks; I have heard it very well spoken of; I shall advise La Garde to carry it to you. I hear no news.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

O GROVELING soul! not to like Homer! The most perfect works of human invention appear to you contemptible: natural beauties lose their effect upon you, and nothing will go down but tinsel or atoms †. If you do not wish to break with me entirely, do not read Virgil; I could never forgive you if you were to speak ill of him. However, if you were to get the 6th book explained to you, and the 9th, which contains the episode of Nisus and Euryalus, and the 11th and 12th, I am sure you would be pleased with them. Turnus would appear to you worthy of your esteem and friendship; and, as I know your character thoroughly, I should be very much concerned for M. de Grignan, if such a personage were to land in Provence: yet, as a good brother, I wish you from the bottom of my heart some such adventure. Since it is predestined, that your head must be turned by something, it is much better it should be turned by a love intrigue, than by the *indefectibility*

* Every one knows that this is a hemistich of Boileau's. But it gave great offence before the commencement of the 18th century.

† Madame de Grignan was very fond of the Cartesian philosophy, which she made her chief study.

of matter, and the *nonconvertible negations* *. It is a melancholy thing to be taken up entirely with atoms and reasonings so subtle that it is scarcely possible to comprehend them.

If you speak to me of your return a hundred years hence, I shall say no more than I have said already: maturely weigh all things, and let not your duties in Provence make you wholly neglect the duties you owe this country, unless there should be reasons so cogent as to force assent from every body. I shall learn, from the accident which happened to M. de Grignan, to avoid the like misfortune; of his three mistresses, there is not one left: I am resolved to contrive it so as to have mistresses of every sort, that they may not all be liable to the necessity of travelling. To conclude, it would be somewhat extraordinary if I should be indebted to you for a wife; nothing more seems wanting to make you different from all other sisters, and nothing but such a termination can properly answer what you have already done for me. Be that as it may, I assure you, my dear sister, that my gratitude and affection for you will always continue the same.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

THE *fly* is at court; this is a fatigue to her, but it cannot be helped. M. de Schomberg † is still at the Meuse

* The *indefectibility of matter* is an expression that belongs to the Cartesian philosophy, founded upon the axioms: Every thing is full; there is no space.

To understand the whimsical terms *nonconvertible negations*, read the Logic of Port Royal, second part, chapter xx.

† Marshal de Schomberg remained almost alone, with a small part of his army, which was reduced nearly to nothing by the different detachments that had been made from it, in order to augment that of the marshal de Crequi.

with his handful of men; that is to say, he is *still alone tête-à-tête.* Madame de Coulanges said the other day, that the office of intendant of that army should be given to M. de Coulanges. When I see the marshal's lady, I will give your compliments to her. The prince is still in his apotheosis at Chantilli; he surpasses there all the heroes celebrated by Homer. You make them appear extremely ridiculous: we agree with you, that this mixture of gods and men is rather extravagant; but we must respect the profound father le Bossu. Madame de la Fayette begins to take broth without being sick; it was this that made us apprehensive of her being dried up.

LETTER D.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Wednesday, July 26, 1677.

M. DE SÉVIGNÉ, it seems, is to learn from M. de Grignan the necessity of having many mistresses, on account of the inconveniences which arise from having but two or three: but M. de Grignan has to learn from M. de Sévigné the pangs of separation, when one of them happens to go off by the stage-coach. The lover, on the day of departure, receives a note which gives him uneasiness, because it is written in such affectionate terms, that it disturbs the gaiety and freedom he expected to enjoy. He then receives a second note from the place where his mistress slept the first night; this puts him quite out of patience. "What the devil! is this to last?" He tells me his grief; he places all his hopes on a journey the husband is to take, thinking that this regularity must be interrupted; for otherwise he could not possibly carry on a correspondence three days in a week.

It is with great difficulty a tender epistle is made out; the letter is signed, as I said, before *the singing leaf* is half full; the source is dried up. He laughs heartily with me, at the style and orthography. I transcribe some passages which you will immediately recognise.

" I depart at length; what a journey! Who is it that reduces me to this cruel extremity?" I could easily answer her; an ungrateful wretch. " I have received a letter from my sister, in terms as tender as yours ought to be: she is affected at my departure. I have been all the day sad, pensive, oppressed; I have sighed, languished, and felt a grief I could not surmount."

It seems to me rather inconsistent to enter a stage-coach with an amorous languor and a languishing amour. How can one conceive that a state, only fit to be passed in a shady wood, on the borders of a rivulet, or under a spreading beech, can possibly suit with the violent motion of that vehicle? In my opinion, anger, rage, jealousy, or revenge, would be much better adapted to that mode of travelling.

" But, I have confidence enough in you to believe that you have not forgotten me. Alas! if you knew the situation I am in, you would think that I deserved well of you, and you would treat me according to my deserts. I already begin to wish myself back again: I defy you to believe that it is not upon your account. I shall neither find joy nor repose upon my arrival. Think at least of the tasteless and insipid life I am going to lead. Adieu! if you love me, you do not love one that is ungrateful."

This is a fragment I found by accident, and in this style is your brother condemned to answer three times a week. Take my word for it, my child, it is a great plague to him. See what an undertaking these poor silly people have engaged in; it is a perfect martyr-

dom, they excite my compassion; the poor boy would sink under it, were it not for the consolation he finds in me. It is a great loss to you, my dear child, that you are not in the way of this confidence. I exceed the limits of my letter to write you this; my view is to amuse you, by giving you an idea of this delightful correspondence.

LETTER DI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday morning, July 28, 1677.

I AM now at Paris, on account of the butterfly I mentioned to you: I have not yet caught it; that is, I have not received the mighty sum I mentioned to you. I should have been quite in despair, if I had not been agreeably amused since Sunday, by taking leave of the gentlemen who are going to Grignan. I intended to have returned yesterday, but I shall not go till Friday; it is impossible to explain to you the torment of chicanery. I supped yesterday with the marchioness of Huxelles, where, for the sixth time, I embraced La Garde, and the abbé de Grignan, and instead of saying to them, "Gentlemen, I am sorry for your departure," I said, "Gentlemen, how great is your happiness! how glad I am that you are going! Go, go, and see my daughter; you will impart joy to her; you will see her in health and spirits: would to God I could be of the party!" Alas! this is not in the order of Providence. But, my dear, I have received the most positive assurances that you are in good health! Montgobert does not impose upon me; tell it to me yourself, however, once more; write it to me both in verse and prose; repeat it to me a thousand times; let every echo resound

the joyful news: if I had a band of music, like M. de Grignan, that should be the subject of my opera. It is true indeed I cannot, without transport, think of the miracle which God has worked in your favour; I am quite out of humour with human Prudence: I can recollect some efforts made by her, which well deserve to be laughed at; she will now be in disrepute for ever. Can you conceive the joy I shall feel, if I see you again with that lovely countenance that delights me, a reasonable quantity of flesh, and a gaiety which is always the effect of a happy disposition? When I see you with as much pleasure as I have beheld you with grief; when I see you, as you ought to appear at your age, and not worn out, consumed, wasted, feverish, exhausted, dried up; in short, when I have only the ordinary evils of human life to suffer, if I ever have that satisfaction, I then may justly boast, that I have felt the extremes both of good and evil. Your example, however, deals destruction on every side: the duke of Sully said to the duchess, "You are indisposed, come to Sully: look at madame de Grignan; the tranquillity of her own house has restored her to health, without her taking any other remedy." But the duchess does not approve this prescription; she prefers that of Vesou, who advises her, in the first place, to lose blood three times, then to take two gentle doses of physic, and then to bathe for twenty days successively: I must own I cannot comprehend this opposite extreme, at such a season as the present, and in such a place as Sully, at least, before All Saints. I saw her yesterday, and she spoke very kindly of you.

I am sorry you have written so long a letter, for the purpose of convincing me, that you are not obliged to take medicine, as you find yourself in perfect health. I am of your opinion; perhaps milk may be injurious to you: regulate your conduct by your own experience;

time and rest contribute to your recovery; I consent to their having the whole honour of the cure. Would to God that the same reasoning would apply to me! if that were the case, I should not go to Vichi: but I fancy you will not willingly dispense with my going; the precaution appears necessary to you, and, as it is impossible to guess whether it will be productive of any good effect or not, I shall make no change in my resolutions; so that, after passing a few days more at Livri, and a few days more at Paris, in order to protract the time to the 17th, I shall set out by way of Epoisses. It has been customary with our family to marry their daughters to gentlemen of the long robe; were it not for us, the long robe would have no wives: we have been told, upon two occasions, that our alliance was not desirable, because ours was a military family; I think we should do well to follow your advice, and, instead of quitting the robe for the sword, quit the sword for the robe. My son is in great perplexity; he cannot put his heel to the ground; but the time this wound has lasted, whilst he has no other complaint, has rendered his stay suspicious to those, who seem to have been sent into the world for nothing but to prate. His conduct is unexceptionable, and yet he is so unfortunate as to be censured. The reputation of men appears to me to be more tender and delicate than that of women; eternal apologies avail my son nothing; so that though he is not able to get on horseback, they will have him join the army. I earnestly entreat that his heel may be examined by Felix†: M. Felix is not at leisure, and thus the time slips away.

D****‡ was yesterday lodged in the Bastile, for hav-

† First surgeon to the king.

‡ This D**** is probably Deffiat, who was in the service of Mon-

ing, at the house of the countess of Soissons, lifted his cane against L****, and struck him, though but slightly; the count de Grammont interposed, the menaces thrown out were very strong; L**** told D**** that he was a coward, and that he would not have dared to raise such a disturbance elsewhere. The countess went to the king to complain of this outrage committed in her house. The king told her, she ought to have done herself justice. Cardinal de Bonzi made her an apology for D****; she told him, that the affair was left entirely to the king, and that if she had been at home at the time, she would have caused D**** to be thrown out of the window. D**** is still in the Bastile; many pay their compliments to him there: I would gladly visit the wife of L****, and condole with D**** ; I will, however, do neither, if you disapprove. The quarrel was occasioned by eight hundred louis-d'ors, which L**** owes to D****, and for which he wished him to draw upon Monsieur. The expressions that passed between them were, "You shall pay me yourself;" "I will not;" and so on. People are so eager for news, that they have caught at this trivial affair, and nothing else is now talked of.

Madame de la Fayette is still indisposed: we cannot help thinking that she ascends the Rhone slowly, and with difficulty: it is not the road to Grignan; your advice will not be followed. I have nothing to say of Paulina, but what I have written already: I love her, even at this distance; she is beautiful as an angel: amuse yourself with her; there are certain philosophical opinions which avail us nothing, and which nobody thanks us for adhering to. It is true, you must leave

sieur. The presence of the chevalier de Grammont seems to indicate, that L**** is M. de Louvigny. Madame de Sévigné was beloved by them both. But these are mere conjectures.

her somewhere in pledge when you quit Grignan; but then it must be only in pledge; and your sister-in-law is a more proper person to intrust her to, than the sisters of St. Mary's convent, for they will not easily give her up again. Is the poor little girl at Aix in good health? I often think of her, and of the little marquis, whose abilities I am afraid will rust for want of a tutor: but how is it possible to send one from such a distance? you should choose him yourself. La Mousse has written to me from Lyons, that he shall pay you a visit at Grignan; that is kind enough; his company will be of great service to your son; I was very much pleased at the idea. Some time after Corbinelli, a gentleman arrived here from Commerci, who filled me with apprehensions for the cardinal's health; he can no longer be said to live, but to languish: I so highly love and esteem this worthy prelate, that the information gives me the greatest uneasiness; time has made no alteration in my sentiments with regard to him; the only effect it has hitherto produced on me, is to increase my tenderness and affection for you. I assure you its whole powers are exerted in that way: but you are cruel yourself, in contributing to it so much as you do; there is a sort of malice in this; you love me, and give me constant proofs of your affection; my heart gives itself up entirely to this joy, and is more and more fixed in the sentiments which are natural to it; you may easily judge of the consequences of this. In other families, I every where see children that hate their mothers; C**** told me the other day, that he hated his like the plague; as well as I remember, she died on that very day; I waited upon him yesterday to pay my compliments of condolence, but he was not at home. I wrote him as proper a letter as I could upon the occasion; he

is in deep mourning, but his heart is full of joy and exultation. Alas, my dear child, you are quite in the other extreme! and I, in return, love you more than life itself.

Isis is returned to Madame, beautiful as an angel, as before. For my part, I wish this *rag* was farther off. The only general topic of conversation at present is the gaiety of Fontainbleau.

LETTER DII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, July 30, 1677.

When I write you a long letter, you are alarmed for my health, thinking application is prejudicial to me; when I write you a short one, you think I am ill in good earnest. What do you think I intend to do now? Why just as I have done before. When I sit down to write, I never know how I shall end; I know not whether my letter will be long or short; I write as long as my pen can move; that is my only rule for composition, and I think it is the best; it suits my natural indolence, and I shall continue to observe it. I conjure you to be under no apprehensions respecting my health, since you will not let me be solicitous with regard to yours. If I were to follow my own inclinations, I should cease to drink the waters of Vichi, as you have left off drinking milk: but as you are of opinion that they may be of service to me, and as I am sure they can do me no harm, I am resolved to take a trip to Vichi: and I have fixed the day of my departure so decidedly, that I should consider it ominous not to go. I hope Providence will not permit me to be disappointed this time.

I have been so long accustomed to disappointments, that I always tremble when I speak of future events. The style of the sceptics pleases me highly; their doubts discover a great prudence, or at least screen them from reproach. "Are you going to Vichi?" "Perhaps I am." "Do you take a house in the royal square this year?" "I do not know." In this doubtful manner we should always speak. I thought I should return to Livri this morning; for the grand affair is at last concluded, my law-suit is at an end: I have set my foot on the butterfly's wing; nine thousand livres were due to me, and I have received but two. I then expected to go back quietly, but the devil would not miss such an opportunity; the abbé Tetu, and the little de Villarceau, laid a wager of four pistoles, and with these four pistoles we were to see the comedy of the Visionaries, which I never saw before. Madame de Coulanges presses me so earnestly that I cannot possibly refuse, and so I must defer till to-morrow what I should have done to-day. I know not whether you are guilty of such weaknesses; for my part, I have many such: however, I must make an effort to reform as I grow old.

D**** is released from the Bastile. As he was imprisoned for no other reason but to make satisfaction to the countess de Soissons, and as neither the king of France nor the king of Spain was interested in the affair, she did not think proper to let her resentment last longer than twenty-four hours. The difference will be accommodated before the marshals of France. This is a little hard upon D****; he must declare that he gave no blows, and put up with all the abuse he received. Such a proceeding is so disagreeable, that a certain person, whom you know very well, said, that when gamesters have so much patience, they should yield

their swords to the cards: that may be called mixing water with the fathers' wine *.

Madame de Schomberg has at last sold her place † to Montanègre for fourscore thousand crowns, having received two hundred and ten thousand livres in ready money, and an assignment of thirty thousand livres to be levied at the next assembly of the states of Languedoc: this is very well, but I have something still better to add; for it is not so much with actions, as the manner of doing them, that we are struck. When she returned the king thanks, he told her that she was always complaining of the state of her health, but that she appeared to him very handsome notwithstanding. "Your majesty," says she, "sets no bounds to your favours; you make me a grant of fourscore thousand crowns, and at the same time pay me compliments besides." "Madam," said the king, "I do not apprehend that you will increase the furniture of your house by the addition of a strong box." To which she replied, "I shall not even see the money your majesty gives me." M. de Louvois then joined in the conversation in the same strain, and the raillery was continued for a quarter of an hour very agreeably. It seems, madame de Schomberg said two or three very good things; from whence the king took occasion to pay her this compliment: "Madam, you may justly think me vain, when I tell you, that I could have sworn you would have made me that very answer." Madame de Montespan too said the most obliging things imaginable to her. Thus are persons treated at court; when a favour is conferred, it is enhanced by the pleas-

* M. de la Rochefoucault said, that the abbé Tetu had put water into the wine of the fathers; in speaking of his Christian stanzas upon various passages of the sacred writings, and of the fathers.

† The place of lieutenant-general of the province of Languedoc.

ing manner in which it is done. Madame de Schomberg, whom I saw yesterday, speaks of you in the most friendly manner possible: she says she regrets the loss of your company, and could wish that you had received as handsome a present as she.

The extraordinary pleasures of Fontainbleau are much talked of; I cannot help considering this a dangerous place: I think old intrigues should no more be moved from place to place, than old people. The continuance of the attachment is often chiefly owing to habit; when the scene changes, it is in danger of expiring. Madame de Coulanges is entreated, urged, importuned, to go there; she declines it on account of the expense, for she could not avoid purchasing three or four new suits. She may go in a suit of black; good heavens! in black! this would greatly diminish the expense.

Marshal de Crequi has been very much indisposed; he was given to understand, that if his disorder increased, he had better leave the command of the army to marshal de Schomberg. Did you never hear of lame persons, who by an alarm of fire or a mad dog have run as nimbly as mountaineers? Thus it happened on this occasion; the name of the marshal de Schomberg, like a specific, immediately restored the marshal de Crequi to perfect health. He will no longer feign illness, and we shall soon see how he will deal with the Germans.

The coadjutor has had very good success in the affair of his woods; he will be permitted to sell them: he seems to be in favour with M. de Colbert; he is a happy man; he has a solar countenance. He dined with me yesterday; the name of Grignan has a surprising effect upon me. "This, count, is the reason I do not hate you: are you not glad to see that dear face again, if it looks as well as I am informed it does? Preserve that precious health; we are never happy when it is in the declining

state in which we have seen it: this idea always haunts me. Give me leave to recommend Paulina to you: I make no doubt she is very pretty, and will be like her mother; what think you of this resemblance? If my daughter leaves Grignan, I approve of her leaving her with your sister, upon condition that she be at liberty to take her back again; for this the sisters of St. Mary's convent might object to." This, my dear child, is what my pen had to say to you. On Wednesdays I answer two of your letters; on Fridays I prattle upon whatever occurs. The baron is in high spirits, and though he cannot stand upon his heel, he appears so little to be an object of compassion, that he is to be pitied for that very reason. It is a perplexing thing to be obliged to justify one's self upon certain subjects.

Madame de Villars has written me a long letter about you; I will send you her letters some day, they will highly amuse you. Madame d'Heudicourt is in all the glory of Niquée: she forgets that she is upon the point of lying in. The prince d'Elbeuf is extremely agreeable. Mademoiselle de Thianges is a great beauty, and is particularly assiduous in paying her court. Madame de Montespan was covered the other day with diamonds; the lustre of so bright a divinity was too dazzling. The attachment appears stronger than ever; kind looks pass between them every moment; never was passion known to regain ground like this. Madame de la Fayette continues to travel on gently by the Rhone; and I, my daughter, love you with a constancy equal to that with which this celebrated river flows from Lyons to the sea. This is somewhat poetical, but it is not the less true.

LETTER * DIII.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Livri, July 30, 1677.

How is it that I do not hear from you, my dear cousin? You wrote to me soon after your arrival at Bussy. I answered your letter, and sent mine to my niece of Saint Mary: since then I have not heard from you. If you have received my letter, you are to blame; if you have not received it, I acquit you. You will explain this affair, if you please: but I want some information also of yourself, and the dear widow. Your son is in the wars, mine is at home. The wound in his heel has only closed within a fortnight, and the flesh is still so inflamed and tender, that he cannot yet walk upon it. In this state, however, he wishes to rejoin the army. I am going to Vichi; I shall set out on the 16th August, shall pass through Burgundy, and take up my abode at Epoisses, because Bourbilly is all in confusion, and from thence I shall again take the road to Vichi, where I must be on the 1st of September. This is my plan; see, my friend, what you can do to meet me. I embrace you, as usual, with all my heart, as I do also the happy widow. My daughter is in Provence at Grignan. Our dear Corbinelli is here, who will take my place.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI.

You have nothing to do, it seems to me, but to step into your carriage the day after her arrival at Epoisses, and go there to see her. I have been upon the point of having the honour of conducting her thither myself, and after staying two days at Bussy, of going to Dijon, and from thence to Chalons: but can we ever do as we wish in this world? There is a fatality, which sages

call Providence, which sets aside or overturns our plans without our knowing how or why. Titus Livius calls it *inexplicabilis vis fati:* "the inexplicable force of destiny." He says in another place: *Non rupit fati necessitatem humanis consiliis;* "his art can never surmount the necessity of fate." And how then could I conquer it?

Do you obtain intelligence of the court and of the army? We hear of nothing but victories. The prince of Orange only aims at the honour of being beaten, and for that purpose he collects immense armies, to say like Hannibal in Horace, speaking of the Roman arms:

Quos optimus fallere et effugere est triumphus.

"All our glory henceforth will be to save ourselves from their hands, or to hide ourselves from them." It is for madame de Sévigné I translate my Latin; you will translate it better than I have done for madame de Coligny. Why do you not teach it her, after the Port Royal method? it would only take you a fortnight. Look at madame de Fontevrauld, and madame de Sablière; they read Horace as we read Virgil. But to return to our folds. I was talking, I believe, of the conduct of our enemies. Their triple alliance constitutes our strength. If all the other princes of Europe were to join them, they would be still more easy to conquer. This is because our sovereign has more spirit and good sense than any of them, more money, more valour, and more experience. A little more Latin; it is my whim to-day. This is just come into my head on our numerous allies:

Vis consilî expers mole ruit suâ.

"Strength without prudence destroys itself."

And this on the king:

Vim temperatam dii quoque provehunt in majus.

"The gods always give new victories to armies that are well commanded."

LETTER DIV.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

Livri, Tuesday, August 3, 1677.

I ARRIVED here on Saturday morning, as I told you I should do. The comedy* we saw on Friday entertained us highly: it appeared to us to be a general representation of mankind; every one has his visions, some more some less extravagant. One of mine at present is an unceasing attachment to this beautiful abbey, which I admire as much as if I had never seen it before, and cannot but think you are greatly obliged to me when I quit it to go to Vichi. This is one of the obligations with which I reproach the good abbé, when I have written two or three letters of business to Bretagne. You do not say a word about your health, and yet it is a thing by no means to be neglected: you will never recover as long as you continue thin; and whether it proceeds from a blood over-heated and rarified, or from the lungs, you have great reason to fear that your juices will be dried up. I should like, therefore, that it was difficult to lace you, provided the fear of growing fat did not make you do penance, as it did last year; for every thing should be taken into consideration: but this fear cannot enter the head of a reasonable person more than once.

I find you have better glasses than the abbé; you certainly see how I behave when I expect a letter from you; I take several turns upon the little bridge; I leave *my daughter's humour*, and look with the *humour of my mother*, to see whether the servant is coming. Then I go back again, and place myself at the end of the grove

* The Visionaries by Desmaretz.

which leads to the little bridge; and, after taking several turns in this manner, I at last see the dear letter arrive: I receive it, and read it with feelings which you can easily divine, for with your glasses you can see into every thing. I expect the second this evening, and will answer it to-morrow. The good abbé is surprised that your journeys to Aix and Marseilles, and the payment of the guards, should prove so expensive to you: you tell me your chateau is a great resource; I agree with you; but I would rather make it my place of residence through choice than necessity. You know what the abbé d'Effiat says; he has married his mistress; he was extremely fond of Veret before he was obliged to live there; but now that he dare not quit the place, he can no longer bear to live in it. In short, my child, I advise you to follow all the good resolutions you have formed with regard to method and economy: this does not restore a family to its former splendour, but it renders life less tedious and insipid.

I have not seen M. de Lislebonne's daughters, but I believe they are not so handsome as the sister of your princess. She * is still at Chaliot; her mother is pregnant, and as much ashamed, as if she had committed a fault. I have already returned you thanks, my lovely child, for all the favours you have conferred upon my old friends. You must certainly have perceived how sensibly madame de Lavardin was affected with your goodness. Madame de Marbeuf, who is now here, sends you her best respects; she is highly delighted with this pretty little place; she says it bears no resemblance to any thing she has ever seen before. My friend Corbinelli is likewise with me; he intends to settle the controversy between you on the subject of epic poetry.

* Madame de Vaudemont.

Wednesday morning.

I have received your letter of the 28th of July: you seem to have been in good spirits when you wrote it, and cheerfulness is a sign of health: this, my beloved child, is my way of reasoning. You press me to come to Grignan; you talk of your melons, your figs, and your fruits of all kinds; ah! I would gladly partake of them, but it is not the will of God that I should take so agreeable a journey this year; neither will you go to Vichi. You tell me, my dear child, that your regard is not visible in certain circumstances; I may say the same of mine, so that we should give each other credit upon this article: I see yours clearly, and I am satisfied likewise as to my own; this is one of the things which are easily believed, because they are true; and one of those truths which are easily established, because they are truths.

I had heard some indistinct accounts of M. de Montausier's letter; I agree with you in thinking he acted in a manner every way worthy of himself; you know how high an opinion I have of his virtues. An attempt was made to deceive him, and those who undertook it succeeded so far as to make him disguise his language; there they stopped however, and so did he. This is an example of sincerity and honour, worthy of the knights of ancient chivalry. One thing is decided, my child, you are certain of having the young ladies* with you; as you will be so many wise heads met together, there can be no doubt you will hit upon the best course, and that which is best calculated to promote your interests; perhaps mine may square with them; this would give me great pleasure.

I do not wonder at the joy of the handsome abbé at

* The young ladies of the Grignan family were nieces of the duchess of Montausier.

seeing himself in the castle of his forefathers, which every day becomes more beautiful and complete. M. de la Garde, of whom I speak with pleasure, because I have a great affection for him, gave rise to those copies, which have made me so uneasy. I assure you, if it had not been for him, I should have continued my brutality; I resisted interest, but I could not help yielding to friendship. If I were but twenty years of age, I would not discover these foibles to him. I was in a crowd, whilst every body round made an outcry against me. "She is mad," said they; "she is jealous! Does not Mons. de St. Geran love his wife? yet he has permitted copies of her picture to be taken. I am resolved to have a copy; I will not be refused: a fine thing indeed, that she should think no one but herself has a right to her daughter's picture! I am resolved to have a better one than hers." All this clamour would have given me no uneasiness, if M. de la Garde had not joined in it; however, I bore it as well as I could, and now they may say what they please. You would laugh heartily if you knew all the vexation that this affair has given me. As you are not fond of portrait-painting, I took it for granted you would be the first to turn me into ridicule. It is whimsical, but this original no longer appears to me either entire or precious; this is a source of grief to me, but we must expect to be mortified in every thing. The business is done, so let us talk no more of it; this article is long and full enough; but I could no more resist giving vent to my uneasiness, than I could keep my poor picture to myself.

I expect my son shortly; he is preparing to join the army; it was not possible for him to do otherwise, and I hope he will lay aside all delays, that he may have the full merit of so noble a resolution. All you say of him is excellent; it is true, that a man who is not in love, is

the most busy creature in the world; before he has waited upon madame de ****, madame de ****, madame de ****, and madame de ****, both the day and night are gone. I remember my son once made this answer to a person who censured the fair Sablière for inconstancy: "No, no, she still loves her dear Philadelphus; it is true, indeed, that to make their love more lasting, they do not see one another so long as they did formerly, and instead of twelve hours, he now does not pass above seven or eight at a time in her company; but tenderness, passion, kindness, and true fidelity, are still in possession of the fair one's heart, and whoever says the contrary, says an untruth."

But let us now talk a little of that truant heart which you consider as lost to you. I am inclined to think it is the heart of Roquesante, and that father Brocar has meddled a little unseasonably with that friendship; pray tell me if I am right. There is another person in the world whose affection aspires, you say, to equal mine: to say the truth, I see no difference; and what will surprise you still more, I am not in the least jealous; on the contrary, it gives me inexpressible joy, and increases my regard and attachment to him.

I am convinced of the pleasure it would give you to see your brother married: I am intimately acquainted with your heart, and know how it would be affected by so extraordinary a circumstance: it is no less extraordinary, that you should not recover your rest and health till after you had left me; but the sincerity with which you own it, is worthy of you; and I am so much pleased at hearing you are better than when you were here, that I shall not quarrel with you upon that score. I doubt not, but M. de Grignan will call you to account for the liberty you take in censuring his music; you who are a mere novice in the art, compared to him,

Good heavens! what a delightful autumn you will pass! what agreeable society you will have! Unhappily for myself, I am but too well convinced that I should be welcome there; judge then the effect this thought will have upon me when I am within two and twenty leagues of Lyons. Adieu, my dearest child, fail not to give my remembrances to the count, the handsome abbé, and La Garde, who knows so well how to seduce me.

LETTER DV.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Friday, August 6, 1677.

I BELIEVE my letter will be short this time; the one I wrote to you on Wednesday was the reverse. Madame de Marbeuf gave place that day to madame de Coulanges, Brancas, and the faithful Achates, who the very same evening began to wrangle with Brancas upon the subject of Jansenism; for Brancas is never a Molinist, except when I have been bled in the foot, and then he treacherously leaves me to support the holy father St. Augustin alone. They wrangled to some purpose, and Brancas, being told that there was not much charity in the style of the *little letters* published upon the subject, immediately drew the book from his pocket, and made it appear that it had been customary in all ages to commit heresies and erroneous opinions in that way. He was told, that things sacred were there treated ludicrously; he then read the eleventh of those divine letters, in which the author fully proves that they themselves turn sacred things into a jest. In short, we took great pleasure in hearing the letters read. It was extraordinary to see the convulsions of expiring prejudice, under the force of truth and reason. This amusement was next day succeeded by another.

Madame de Coulanges, who was so obliging as to come here to see me, kindly communicated to us some of the stories which are told to amuse the ladies at Versailles; and which is called lulling them. She then lulled us, and told us of a green island, in which a princess was brought up more beautiful than the day; the fairies breathed upon her every moment: the prince of Delights was her lover; they both arrived one day in a crystal carriage at the court of the king of Delights; it was an admirable sight, every body looked up, and could not forbear singing, "Come, come, let us make haste, Cybele our goddess is descending." This story lasted an hour; I leave out a considerable part of it, because, as I understand, this green island is in the ocean; you are not obliged to know what passes there; had it been in the Mediterranean, I would have told all, as it would doubtless be a discovery M. de Grignan would be very glad to be made acquainted with. We hear no news of any kind; gallantry and the concerns of the gay world are entirely banished by Mars. Your brother, lest he should not find an opportunity of exerting himself, is resolved to go directly to the army; he will go to Bourbon in October, if there should be occasion. The reputation of these military gentlemen is so tender, that they had rather do too much than too little.

Mademoiselle de Meri sends you some beautiful shoes; there is one pair so delicate that I think them only fit to sleep in: do you remember how this folly made you laugh one evening? I have only to add, that I entreat you not to thank me, my child, for the trifling services I render you; consider the motive that gives rise to my actions. no one thanks another for being beloved; your own heart must teach you a different sort of gratitude.

LETTER DVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Tuesday evening, August 10, 1677.

You will not now have to complain that I send you no news. The report of the siege of Charleroi has made all the young people run, and even the lame ones too. My son sets out to-morrow in a post-chaise without any attendants; those who tell him he ought not to go, would be extremely surprised if he were to stay at home. It is highly praise-worthy in him to make such an effort to do his duty. But do you know who are gone besides? Only the duke de Lesdiguières, the marquis de Cœvres, Dungeau, La Fare, yes La Fare himself, prince d'Elbeuf, M. de Marsan, little de Villarceaux, and *tutti quanti* (all the rest). I forgot M. de Louvois, who set out last Saturday. Many are of opinion that nothing will result from all this bustle, but a delay of the journey to Fontainbleau. M. de Vins, the whole body of musqueteers, and a considerable number of soldiers, have entered Charleroi, so that it is thought, that, as the army commanded by M. de Luxembourg is augmented by many regiments just come out of garrison, the prince of Orange will hardly attempt to lay siege to the town. Do you remember an affair of this nature, of which we once wrote a lamentable account from Lambesc, which did not come to hand till five or six days after the siege was raised? Perhaps they may go more gently to work this time, and think it sufficient to invest the town-house: you will soon know the result of this affair. The departure of these undaunted warriors is at present the chief object of the public attention. I returned yesterday from Livri in order to take leave of my son, and prepare for my departure on Monday. But I must

here inform you of an event that will surprise you, which is the death of poor mademoiselle du Plessis Guénégaud *; she was taken ill last week; she was three times attacked by a fever, and at last grew delirious: she was to have taken an emetic, but it was not given, because it was not the will of God that it should, and last night, being the seventh since her illness, she died. When I heard of her death this morning, I was both surprised and afflicted; so many circumstances occurred to my memory, that I could not help weeping bitterly. It was mere accident that introduced me to her acquaintance; but our dispositions were exactly suited to each other, and I believe few of her old friends are more concerned at her death than I am. I went in quest of the whole family, but nobody was to be seen. I was desirous of giving the holy water, and meditating upon the life and death of the deceased, but this was not agreed to; then I went to madame de la Fayette's, where this melancholy event was much talked of. She had experienced many misfortunes in the latter part of her life; a decree had been given in her favour, and so hard-hearted was M. Poncet, that he refused to sign it till certain trivial and unmeaning punctilios were settled. This unjust delay, which grieved her the more, as it was unexpected, had such an effect upon her, that she returned home in a fever; from whence some have inferred, that M. Poncet was the first cause of her death, and that the business was completed by the physicians, who neglected to give her an emetic †: but we who consider all events as under the immediate direction of Providence,

* Isabella de Choiseul Praslin, daughter of Charles de Choiseul, marechal of France.

† Emetics at first found as many adversaries as bleeding found advocates. This was one of the most fatal wars physicians ever waged against their patients.

are of opinion, that her hour was come, having been fixed from all eternity, and that this concatenation of little circumstances served only to hasten the catastrophe. Arguments of this kind, however, do not console those who are really grieved at her death; but she will not be much lamented, the grief expressed for her by many seems to be far from sincere. The general remark is, "nothing could satisfy her, misfortunes had soured her temper," and so on. I make no doubt but you comprehend my meaning. I have been a little prolix in my account of this event; but I cannot help thinking you listen to me with attention; just as I do to what you write to me; every word is precious, and when you digress from your subject, you please as much as when you adhere closely to it.

You have made a rough campaign in the Iliad; the account you have given us of it is full of humour. It is hoped marshal de Crequi's campaign will prove more prosperous: the Germans are at Mouson *; two years ago they were much farther off. The army of M. de Crequi has changed its name †, as you justly observed. M. de Schomberg has paid marshal de Crequi a visit, telling him he quitted his garrison in order to serve as a volunteer under him; that he was of no manner of use there, and that he had written to the king to offer him his service as one of his old soldiers. Marshal de Crequi answered in the politest manner possible, and marshal de Schomberg is come back, not having found any thing to do.

Every body here is upon the alert, whilst you are philosophising at your chateau. You call don Robert a mere word-catcher. Good God! if he were to pub-

* A town in Champagne upon the Meuse.

† It before went by the name of the army of Schomberg.

lish all you say! "No last judgement; God the author of good and evil; no such thing as sin!" Do you call all this word-catching?

You have then strictly observed the ceremonies of the country with your ladies. If they had offered to leave you, that you might write to me, you would have renounced me; what is a mother? how can any one write to a mother? To deal plainly with you, my child, you spoil me to such a degree by your love for me, that I know of no family where affection appears to me strong enough. We have lately had M. de Simiane, and the good d'Escars at Livri; they were very well pleased with the jaunt: your little Arnoux was with us; he came before them with Guintrandi, who upon this occasion discovered his usual inconstancy. Arnoux is become a very pretty fellow, but he is too pretty: he sometimes sings at Versailles; he hopes M. de Rheims will engage him for his choir; he has seven hundred livres a year at the holy chapel; he likes Paris extremely. Can you possibly think that a young man of his abilities could confine himself to Grignan in the hopes of a benefice? it is a mere jest, he would not do it for five hundred crowns. Do not entertain such thoughts, count: do as I do; when I see those who live with me uneasy, and want to better themselves, a desire takes hold of me of never seeing them again. I rejoice to hear you are in health: if you could contrive to restore mine, as well as you have done your own, I should not go to Vichi. I think your whey would be no bad remedy for me. I shall write no more till I receive your second letter.

Wednesday morning, August 11.

I have received your letter, my dear child, of the 4th of this month; it is of a tolerable length. Suffer us to

love and admire your letters: your style resembles a river that flows gently on; those who are acquainted with it can endure no other. You are not a proper judge of it yourself; you reap no pleasure from it, for you do not read your own letters: we read them over and over again, and I think we are tolerable judges of epistolary writing; I mean Corbinelli, the baron, and myself. I cannot help thinking of the last words of your letter; there is something terrible in them. "You can now suffer no farther ill, for I am no longer with you; I was the disorder of your mind, of your health, and of your house—I have been the cause of all your distress." What words are these! how can you use them, and how can I read them? What you say is more afflicting than all my uneasiness, more afflicting than all that people were so cruel as to tell me when you went away. I thought they had wagered which should kill me the soonest. I find it is the same tune with you: I laughed at them, when I thought you were on my side; but now I see plainly that you are in the confederacy against me. I can give you no other answer, but that you made me a few days ago; "When all the measures we take to live happily prove ineffectual, the sooner it is over, the better." I entirely agree with you; the sooner it is over, the better. I shall answer the remainder of your letter on Friday.

LETTER DVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, August 13, 1677.

I SHALL say no more of the grief you have given me, by saying your presence was the cause of all my uneasiness and vexation: it is a strange idea that you have taken into your head, and very unlike my sentiments for you.

I could say a great deal upon this subject, but a thousand reasons oblige me to be silent; I shall not however ask leave to think of it.

My son went off yesterday; he is generally praised for his enterprising spirit: those who blame him for going, would have said a thousand times worse of him if he had staid; there is something whimsical in the opinion of the world upon these occasions; he will find it easier, however, to justify himself for going upon this random expedition, than for staying quietly at home. I must own, I approve of his design, so you see I can part with my children without much anxiety.

I have for a long time adopted your opinion, that bad company is preferable to good: how dismal it is to part with the good! and what a pleasure it is to get rid of the bad! Do you remember how we were tormented at Fouesnel, and how overjoyed we were when the company thought proper to take their leave? I think we may then establish it as a maxim, that nothing is more desirable than bad company, and nothing more to be dreaded than good. Let whoever is puzzled with this enigma, call upon us for the solution of it.

On Monday I shall pay a visit to our friend Guitaut; I hope he will consider me as company that should be shunned: for my part, I always thought him a man that should be carefully avoided. His wife lies in here; she is always in despair, as they have now a law-suit upon their hands. The worthy abbé is now with me; I am not very cheerful, as you may suppose; but what does it signify?

It is confirmed that Charleroi is besieged; if I hear any news between this and midnight, I will certainly let you know. M. de Lavardin, and all the gentlemen who are without commissions, are gone to join the army; this to me appears a great folly; however, I hope that all these mountains will only be delivered of mice.

The journey of La Bagnols is fixed; you will soon have an opportunity of observing her languishing, her reveries, and her thoughtful disposition: she sometimes starts up as it were in surprise; and madame de Coulanges says to her, "My poor sister, you are thinking of nothing." Her style is altogether insupportable; and makes me vulgar and uncouth from the fear of catching her way of expressing herself. She has made me renounce delicacy, refinement, and politeness, for fear of adopting cant, as you say: it is a terrible thing to be quite rusticated. "I hope I may flatter myself that I do not displease you from the ardent desire I have to make myself agreeable;" and a thousand such insipid compliments, which I sometimes have by heart, and forget a few moments after. We call these expressions "the dogs of Basan," they are quite mad. Adieu, my beloved child; yield to no melancholy apprehensions, or I shall be assailed with a thousand; is it not enough that you have told me already, that you were the cause of nothing but affliction to me? What language is this! what then can do me good, and what pleasure can I have in life without you?

LETTER DVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Sunday evening, August 15, 1677.

I COULD never have thought, my child, that a day so long expected could have been so exactly foreseen; the sixteenth, however, which we have been wishing for these two months, is at last just arrived. I shall set out with the worthy abbé to-morrow at day-break: we are not in very high spirits, but we have some entertaining books; and as we shall not travel quite so fast as the stage, we shall have leisure to think of those we love by

the way. A false report was current yesterday, that the siege of Charleroi was raised: every body considers this as ominous, so ill an opinion has been conceived of our enemies; this thought gives me pleasure, for I do not much like to think of a battle. My son has written to me twice; the wound in his heel is increased by the jolting of the chaise. The daughter-in-law you propose to me, whose constitution may be capable of bearing the greatest fatigues, has a perfect resemblance to the beauteous Dulcinea: I fancy we can expect no other match, for we are shunned by every body else; I find, by the aspect of the planets, that we were not born to be happy.

You appear to me to be quite tired of the ladies of Montelimart. Ah! why am I not with you to keep your apartment quiet, and give you time to breathe? I see you are overwhelmed with the burden; these are ill-judged connexions; such company does not at all suit you: you should be left to your amiable family; all the members who compose it are now assembled. Would to God the *worthy* could be tempted to go there to visit the archbishop: pray contrive that the prelate may write to him at Vichi; who knows what an effect it may produce? For my own part, I shall not mention a syllable to him on the subject, as I well know the strong opposition he would certainly make to such a request from me: we must go quite a contrary way to work with him, to bring him to comply with our wishes; this is the only way to make any impression.

As for you, count, you cannot possibly have so strong a desire to see me at Grignan, as I have to embrace you there. In the name of God, impute not to me the act of barbarity we are about to commit, it really oppresses my heart to think of it; believe there is nothing I more earnestly desire; but I am bound to the good abbé,

who invents so many wretched arguments against the journey, that I perfectly despair of making any impression upon him.

I dined to-day with the coadjutor: he complains of the cruelty of the abbé, who it seems left him alone at Paris, *poor soul!* without friend, acquaintance, house, or the smallest knowledge of any place where he might hide his head. I have visited madame de Vins, who most assuredly entertains a very high esteem for you; she was here this morning with the abbé Arnaud: I refused to comply with the request they made me, to leave them your picture to be copied at their house; for the very idea of parting with it gives me so much pain, that I cannot possibly bear it at Vichi; on my return, if I find I have collected sufficient strength to support the weight of such a trial, I will consent to it. I entreat you to be careful of your health, if you have any regard for me; it is now so well confirmed, that, were it not on your account, I should give up all thoughts of my journey to Vichi. It is difficult to carry our imagination into futurity, when we are under no sort of uneasiness; but you wish it, and it is done. Madame de Coulanges has been my guide for the last two or three days; she has given herself a great deal of trouble on my account; indeed she has thought of nothing but me.

LETTER DIX.

TO THE SAME.

Villeneuve-le-Roi, Wednesday, Aug. 18, 1677.

Well, my child, are you satisfied at last? You see I am now on the road. I set out on Monday, when the town was full of a piece of news which had not been so

much as suspected. I was extremely anxious to know whether we had not given battle, for we have been undeceived as to the raising the siege of Charleroi, which had been, we know not how, falsely reported. I therefore begged M. de Coulanges to send me word to Melun, where I was to sleep, what he learned from madame de Louvois relative to the affair: in short, I saw the servant arrive, who informed me that the siege of Charleroi was raised in good earnest, and that he had seen the letter M. de Louvois had written to his lady; so that, thank heaven, I can now pursue my journey in tranquillity; this is certainly a great satisfaction, as I shall experience none of the inquietudes which are the natural effects of war. What say you to this good-natured prince of Orange? Would you not be apt to imagine, that his whole care is employed in rendering the waters of service to me, and turning our letters, written four years ago, into ridicule, in which we very gravely reasoned on an event that had not come to pass? We will take care he shall not catch us napping a third time*.

I am now going to proceed on my journey, in which I follow you step by step: I had some little qualms at Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, on seeing, a second time, the place where we wept so heartily together; the hostess appeared to me a good conversible sort of a personage: I questioned her very earnestly about the state of your health the last time you were there; she told me you were very melancholy, very thin, and that M. de Grignan tried what he could to raise your spirits, and prevail on you to eat something: so you see I guessed but too truly. She told me she heartily partook of my

* The experience of the prince of Orange was very ill seconded by the Spaniards.

anxiety; that she, too, had a daughter married at a great distance from her, and that on the day of their parting, they both fainted away. I fancied the daughter must be, at the lowest computation, as far as Lyons. I asked her, how she came to let her go so far from her? She told me, it was for the sake of an advantageous match, with a very honest man, thank God! I then asked the name of the place; she told me it was at Paris, that he was a butcher near the Mazarine palace, and that he had the honour to serve M. du Maine, madame de Montespan, and very often his majesty: I leave you to meditate on the justness of the comparison, as well as the simplicity of my good hostess. I partook in her affliction, as she had done in mine. I have since travelled in the finest weather, through the most delightful country, and over the best roads in the world. You told me it was winter when you travelled this way; it is now summer, and the finest season you can possibly imagine. I am every where inquiring after you, and have every where the satisfaction to receive information; if I had heard no news of you since you passed this way, I should have been very unhappy, for I hear of nothing but your thinness; but I live in hopes the princess Olympia will have made way for the princess Cleopatra. The good abbé is very careful of me; though I think the complaisance, alacrity, and attention, he shows in what relates to me, are properly to be charged to your account; since his extreme attention in conducting me safely, is, as he tells me, from his great desire to oblige you: I told him I would take care you should be informed of his assiduity. We are now reading a history of the emperors of the East, written by a young princess, daughter of the emperor Alexis*.

* The princess Anne Comnène wrote this history at the beginning of the twelfth century, which is in reality very interesting, and has been

It is extremely entertaining; but be it known to you, we read it without any prejudice to Lucian: I had never, till now, seen any of his pieces, except four or five celebrated ones; the rest are in every respect equal to these: but what I prefer even to Lucian, is your letters; I assure you, my regard for them is in no respect owing to my affection; you may ask all your acquaintances: answer me, M. de Grignan, M. de la Garde, and M. l'abbé; is it not true, that nobody writes as she does? I accordingly amuse myself with two or three I have brought with me. What you say of a certain lady deserves to be printed. However, I do not retract; I have seen the stage-coach pass, and am more fully persuaded than ever, that it is impossible to be languishing in such a vehicle. A-propos, La B**** has distinguished herself by her cruel and inhuman conduct on the death of her mother†: she ought certainly to have lamented her, were it only from interested motives; she is equally generous and unnatural; she has scandalised every body; she did nothing but chatter and brush her teeth, whilst the poor woman was dying. I think I hear you exclaim at this. Ah, my child, how extremely opposite is your conduct! I have had very serious thoughts on this subject. Madame de G**** had figured high in life, had made the fortune of some, and constituted the happiness and pleasure of others; she had a hand in great affairs; she enjoyed the confidence of two ministers (M. de Chavigny and M. Fouquet), to whose taste she did real honour. She possessed great elevation of mind, had high views, and the art of employing a

well translated by the president Cousin. She gives a very different idea of the croises and the crusades from what we receive from so many boasted panegyrics.

† Madame de Guénégaud. See Letter of the 10th of August.

splendid fortune to the most noble purposes; the loss of this she was unable to support: the disorder of her affairs soured her temper, and she was irritated by misfortune; this had a wonderful influence on every thing that related to her, and might possibly serve as a pretext to the coldness of her friends*. In this respect her behaviour was quite opposite to that of M. Fouquet, who, though intoxicated with his exaltation, supported most heroically his disgrace: I have always been struck with the comparison. These are the reflexions of Villeneuve-le-Roi: you may easily judge there would have been no leisure for such meditations, but for the convenience of sitting entirely at my ease in my own carriage. I add to these, that I think the world is too easily consoled at the death of a person whose good qualities certainly very far exceeded her bad ones.

Joigny, Wednesday evening.

We have had the finest ride imaginable since dinner. This is really a beautiful country, and a delightful little estate: though it has been let for no more than twenty thousand crowns since the late bad times, it was formerly rented at a much higher sum. There is only one life upon it, before it will come into your possession: this will be a lucky throw. How are you? do you begin to grow plump? do you sleep well? Count, you never say a word about my daughter; does your pen refuse to set down any thing on this subject? Let

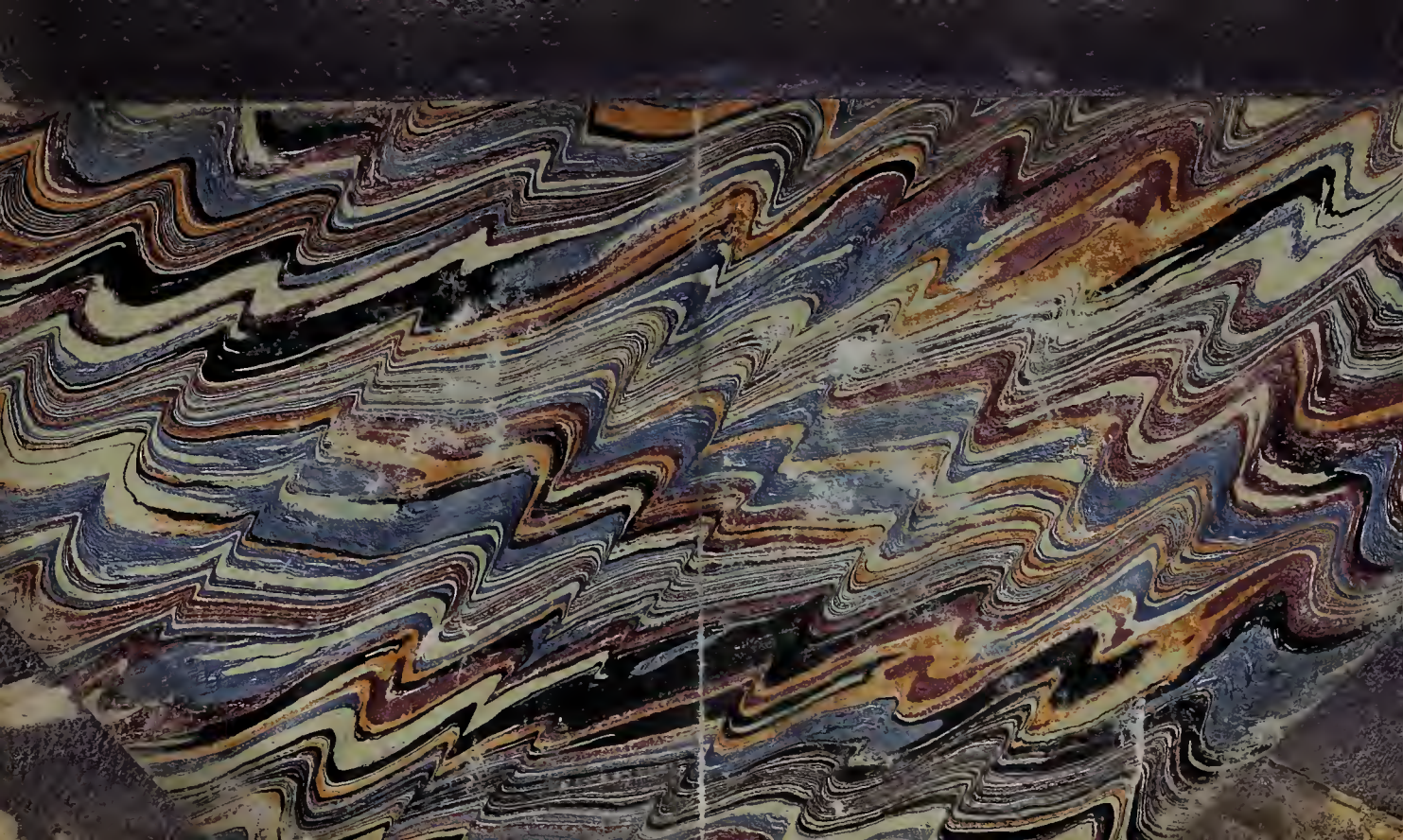
* It has been seen elsewhere, that her husband, secretary of state, had been stripped of the greatest part of his fortune by the chamber of justice that Colbert established against the financiers. Madame de Guénégaud was of the family of Choiseul. She interested herself warmly, according to the spirit of the times, in the civil wars, and had considerable influence: she negotiated the return of the great Condé, his family and partisans, to France.

me hear how your music goes on; for that wife of yours begins, methinks, to play the learned and fine lady, and I am sometimes inclined to think she is no great admirer of your harmony. My advice to you is, not to trouble yourself any more about Arnoux. His views are by no means directed towards your convenience at Grignan. He is young, gets a great deal of money, and will get still more; he even aspires to be admitted into the king's chapel. Do as I do, my dear count, when I find people begin to be indifferent about me; which is, to adopt the resolution from that moment, to be equally indifferent about them; this produces the happiest consequences imaginable. I supped the other evening with the marchioness d'Huxelles, where I found Rouville, who spoke to me of you so seriously, and with so much esteem and repect, that I really think he will not live long. I have an infinity of compliments besides, from your St. Gerans, your de Vins, &c.; in short, enough to make up the number to which you want, as they say, to augment them, on account of the discovery you happened to make the other day at Aix. I return to you, my dear child; I grow uneasy at not hearing from you, and if I have no letter to-morrow, I shall really be grieved. I hope you will send me word whether I have guessed rightly in regard to the false heart you are unwilling to reckon upon.

Auxerre, Thursday at noon.

We are just arrived, after a tolerably hot journey. We saw the castle of Seignelai, as we passed, and bestowed our blessing on it, so that we are in hope it will thrive. But we had the misfortune not to lodge in the same place where you lodged. We were badly accommodated, having contented ourselves with following the old beaten track. I have sent to the post-office, to know

whether there is any letter for me; the post-master it seems was out of the way, and I wait his return. His wife told us she had lodged the countess de Grignan as she passed that way, and that she looked rather thin; that this was on a Friday, and that they had, notwithstanding, set the pot on the fire; but that the count ate nothing but a few strawberries. I am quite vexed to have put up where there is such wretched accommodations; and the more so, as we are to pass the remainder of the day here, to rest our horses. To-morrow we may expect to reach Epoisses, where M. de Guitaut will receive us with a hearty welcome. I am sorry I shall not have the pleasure of meeting his lady there, who is a woman of very good sense, and of easy manners. She stays behind, on account of a law-suit, which has so hastened her reckoning, that she has sent as far as this place for her midwife, who is to deliver her in the very heart of Paris: it is impossible to pay a greater compliment to the force of habit. I am wholly yours, my dearest; I shall never be prevailed upon to believe it can possibly be for my advantage to be absent from you; I did not think you could have been persuaded into this ridiculous notion; but you have written me such things on this head as I shall never forget. We shall be very much to be pitied when your affairs oblige you to come and see me once more.

END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.

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